

Saturday December 21 1996

Abu Dhabi D 6.50	Greenland D 400	Hong Kong HK 2.50
Algeria D 12.00	Hong Kong HK 2.50	Hong Kong HK 2.50
Andorra FF 100	India IN 100	India IN 100
Antigua B 26.00	Indonesia Rp 1,000	Indonesia Rp 1,000
Armenia AMD 100	Iran R 100	Iran R 100
Australia A 1.50	Italy L 1,000	Italy L 1,000
Austria S 13.76	Japan Y 100	Japan Y 100
Bahamas B 26.00	Korea W 100	Korea W 100
Bahrain B 2.76	Latvia L 100	Latvia L 100
Bangladesh T 100	Lithuania L 100	Lithuania L 100
Barbados B 26.00	Malaysia M 1.00	Malaysia M 1.00
Belarus B 2.76	Mexico M 20.00	Mexico M 20.00
Belgium F 103.34	Moldova L 100	Moldova L 100
Belize B 26.00	Monaco M 100	Monaco M 100
Bermuda B 26.00	Netherlands G 1.00	Netherlands G 1.00
Bhutan B 26.00	New Zealand NZ 2.00	New Zealand NZ 2.00
Bolivia B 26.00	Norway N 100	Norway N 100
Bosnia B 26.00	Poland Z 100	Poland Z 100
Brazil R 1.00	Portugal E 200	Portugal E 200
Bulgaria B 26.00	Romania R 100	Romania R 100
Canada C 1.00	Russia R 100	Russia R 100
Cayman C 26.00	Saudi Arabia R 100	Saudi Arabia R 100
Chad C 26.00	Singapore S 2.00	Singapore S 2.00
China C 1.00	South Africa R 100	South Africa R 100
Czech C 100.00	Spain P 166.37	Spain P 166.37
Dominican D 26.00	Sweden S 100	Sweden S 100
Ecuador E 100	Switzerland F 100	Switzerland F 100
Egypt E 26.00	Taiwan T 100	Taiwan T 100
El Salvador S 26.00	Thailand T 100	Thailand T 100
Equatorial E 26.00	Turkey L 100	Turkey L 100
Estonia E 100	USA US 2.76	USA US 2.76
Fiji F 26.00		
Finland F 100		
France F 100		
Germany D 1.00		

The Guardian

INTERNATIONAL

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

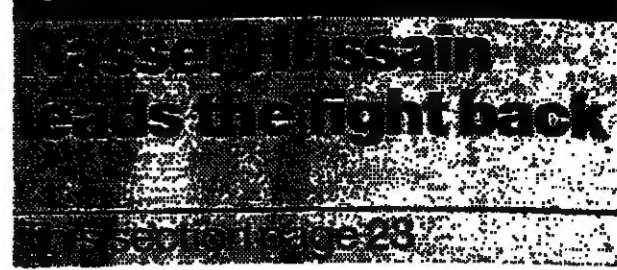
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48,742

The Week



Sport



Racists force Becker to leave Germany

By Ian Traynor in Bonn

TENNIS star Boris Becker is planning to emigrate from Germany, probably to the United States, because of persistent racial harassment and taunts aimed at his black wife and infant son.

In a television interview to be screened tomorrow evening in Germany, the world number two reveals that his wife Barbara and son Noah, aged three, are under 24-hour protection because of telephone threats and racial abuse.

On a recent trip to the doctor's in Munich, Mrs Becker and her son were escorted by three bodyguards.

According to Bild newspaper yesterday, Becker says in the recorded interview that he is not prepared to put Noah into a German school and intends to emigrate before his son reaches school age.

Becker recently bought a \$500,000 house in Florida.

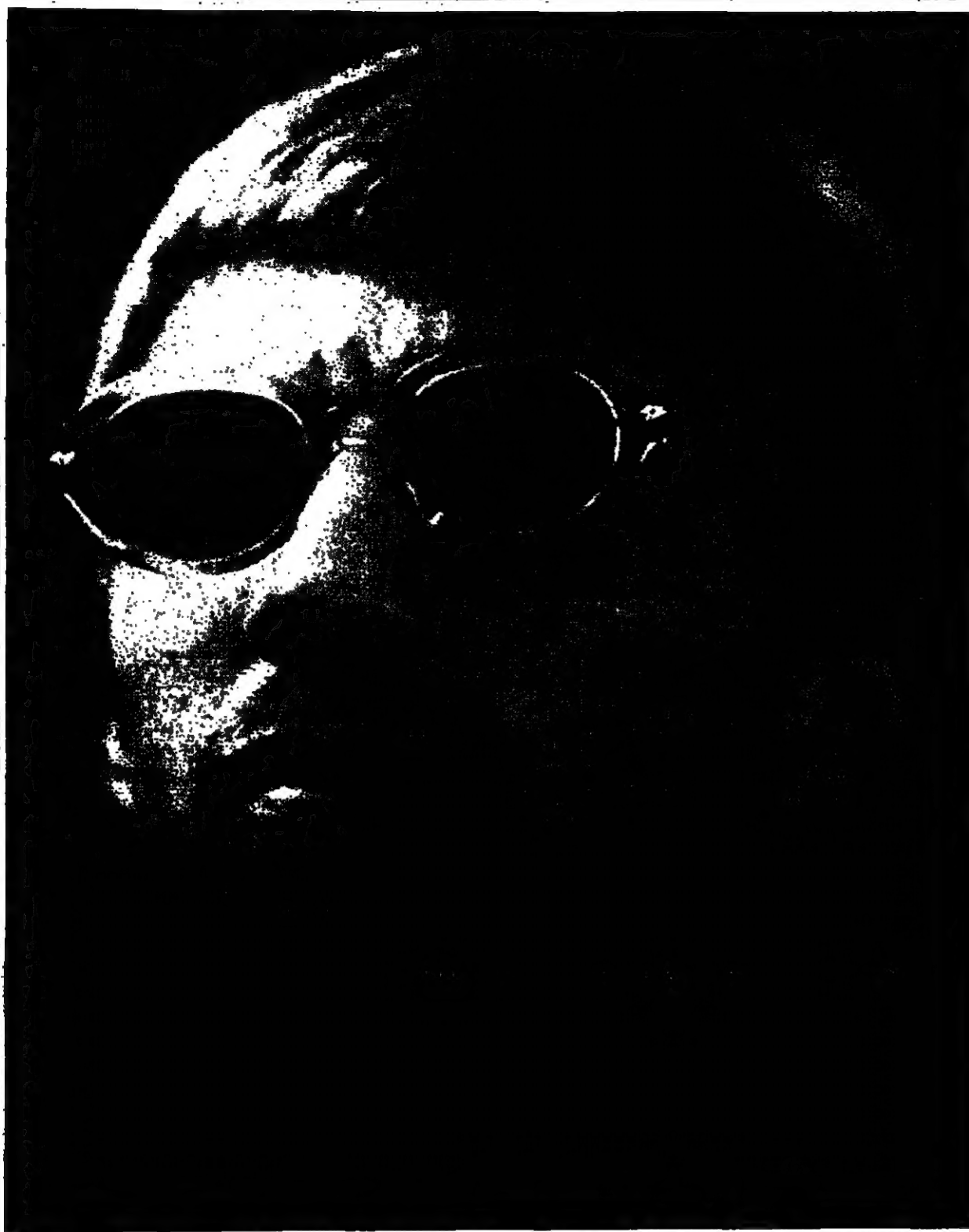
His plan to emigrate and his frank indictment of German racial intolerance are certain to shock and outrage many and hugely embarrass the German establishment.

Becker was hailed as Germany's prodigal son when he returned from tax exile in Monaco in 1984 to live at home and pay the price in heavy taxation. Since then he has earned huge admiration and sympathy as a straight-talking but fair commentator.

He was in Florida yesterday and could not be contacted.

The star also makes clear in the interview that he is desperate to have more children, but apparently not in Germany. If he is granted seven wishes, he says, the first six would be to have another child, the seventh to win Wimbledon again.

Meanwhile, speculation grew about a possible tax



Boris Becker, whose black wife and son required bodyguards for a recent trip to the doctor's

scandal centring on Becker. Bavarian tax officials raided his Munich home and took away shelves of files.

The issues of emigration and tax investigation were not thought to be linked.

Investigators are believed to be examining his finances for the years 1989-93, despite the fact that

during that period Becker lived in Monaco and was liable for German tax only on money earned in Germany.

During the summer, Peter Graf, the father of the world's top woman player, Steffi, went on trial in Mannheim in southern Germany on charges of duping the taxman out of \$8 million due on her earnings.

Steffi successfully pleaded that she knew nothing of her own financial affairs. Mr Graf declared on the opening day of the court case that he was entirely responsible for her finances.

Many of the highest-earning German sports stars, such as Michael Schumacher and Franz Beckenbauer, have opted for tax exile in Monaco or Austria, as have pop stars and television celebrities.

The singer Michael Jackson dropped the German leg of his world tour earlier this year, claiming that the tax payable would render the trip unprofitable.

Fierce rebuke over failure to invest

Railtrack hoards £700m

By Keith Harper, Transport Editor

RAILTRACK, the privatised monopoly that runs the country's track and signals, was last night severely reprimanded by the railway watchdog and told to put its house in order within a month after failing to invest £700 million of government money in Britain's crumbling rail system.

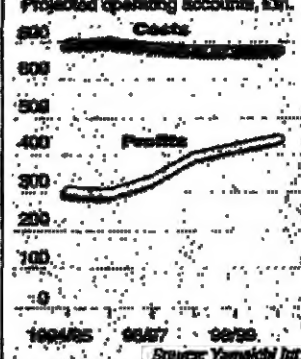
In an unusually outspoken rebuke, John Swift, the rail regulator, warned Railtrack's chairman, Robert Horton, that the current level of underspend was "totally unacceptable". He demanded that Railtrack plough the cash back into the industry immediately.

When the issue was raised yesterday by the pressure group Save Our Railways, an underspend figure of £230 million was mentioned. But later Railtrack admitted that the underspend was more than double that, and that its annual accounts showed an accrual on maintenance of £700 million.

The investment warning follows a series of reprimands for privatised utilities over levels of investment. The electricity regulator is studying his industry's investment record and last week the water watchdog hit out at companies over their spending.

The accrued funds, which were buried in the last published Railtrack accounts for the year to the end of last March, comprise £267 million for maintenance and £442 million for property maintenance. A spokesman said: "This money will be spent. It has been earmarked for main-

Fast track



lowest accident rate for many years.

Labour reacted angrily to the revelations about Railtrack's underspend. Andrew Smith, shadow transport secretary, said the fact that the company could get away with starving the railways of millions of pounds of investment showed the privatised rail set-up was a farce.

"It is simply absurd that the excuse Railtrack comes up with is that the industry is not used to spending money," he said. "Railtrack was in a 'privileged position of natural monopoly' and therefore had a responsibility to improve the railways."

Mr Swift has given the privatised company until next month to set out its investment programme "clearly and unequivocally". In a letter to Save Our Railways, he said he expected the company to demonstrate to his satisfaction that it was delivering its services effectively.

The letter demonstrates that tough times lie ahead for Railtrack, partly because of new powers that will be assumed by the regulator in the new year. He will no longer be answerable to the Transport Secretary, Sir George Young, and is likely to take a more independent line to protect consumers.

Save Our Railways' co-ordinator, Jonathan Bray, said Railtrack had broken the rules on how much it should spend on maintenance. "It has been caught putting profits first and essential maintenance second."

The Guardian Personality of the Year

This year's BBC Personality of the Year shortlist (which includes John Major and a woman who became a victim of a vicious and terrifying homophobic attack) is set to be a highly contentious reflection of the year's events. The Guardian's own Personality of the Year offers readers the chance to express their views. Please register your choice by voting for one of the members listed below. Vote early and vote often.

For services to the Labour Party: Neil Hamilton, 0800 299 995

For services to the Conservative Party: John Major, 0800 299 995

For services to the Liberal Democrats: Tony Blair, 0800 299 995

For services to the Green Party: David Cameron, 0800 299 995

For services to the SNP: Gordon Brown, 0800 299 995

For services to the DUP: Peter Dinklage, 0800 299 995

For services to the BNP: Piers Morgan, 0800 299 995

For services to the UKIP: David Beckham, 0800 299 995

Woman 'killed fiancé after row'

Evidence in road rage case weak and tenuous, barmaid's lawyer tells court

Owen Bowcott

TRACEY Andrews, the barmaid charged with murdering her fiancé in what police initially identified as a road rage killing, had threatened a previous boyfriend with a knife — and may even have pulled a weapon on the dead man once before, a court heard yesterday.

The mother-of-two, aged 27, is alleged to have stabbed Lee Harvey, aged 25, to death in an isolated country lane less than a mile from their home in Alvechurch, Worcestershire, after an argument over a black woollen hat. She spoke only once, to confirm her name and address, when she appeared before magistrates in Redditch, Worcestershire, to face the murder charge. She sat in the glass-panned dock, her eyes downcast throughout the three-hour hearing.

Kerry Moreton, prosecuting counsel, told the court there was evidence of a history of violence by Andrews against her fiancé during their 2½ year relationship. In a previous case she had hit him over the head with a bottle, punched him in the face and bit his ear while they were at a nightclub.

Police called to the murder scene shortly before 11pm on December 1 found Andrews covered almost from head to toe with blood.

Ms Moreton said Andrews had told police a vehicle overtook them. "She said the driver got out and... there was shouting and swearing. The passenger then got out and began to physically assault Mr Harvey."

Andrews had later told officers she was knocked to the ground. The next thing she remembered was seeing a fat man calmly walk back to an F-registered Ford Sierra which drove off.

But yesterday Ms Moreton told the court that the Sierra had not been traced and other witnesses insisted the Escort had been travelling alone.

Forensic evidence showed that blood on Andrews' clothing was consistent with splashes spurring from Mr Harvey's injuries as she severed arteries in his neck with a knife. A clump of hair, which matched Andrews', had been found close to her fiancé's hand, and three or four similar hairs were found in his fist.

Ms Moreton added: "There was an argument. They both got out of the car and she attacked him... she was the person who put the knife into the victim."

The police had originally described the killing as a road rage murder, and Andrews had told a press conference that a fat man with staring eyes had stabbed her boyfriend to death.

Andrews' solicitor, Tim Robinson, said the prosecution's case was "weak and tenuous" with a lack of evidence.

Andrews believed the motive was racial. Lee Harvey had such a dark skin that he was frequently mistaken as coming from Pakistan.



Tracy Andrews: denies murder charge

Inside

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2 Mother of three freed on appeal

Gary Young

MOTHER of three jailed for attacking her husband's lover with a stiletto-heeled shoe collapsed in the dock yesterday after two Court of Appeal judges quashed her nine-month sentence.



Debbie Smith leaves the court clutching a photograph of one of her sons yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH: STEFAN ROUSSEAU

that Mrs Smith and her brother-in-law's house and found Mrs French in her husband's T-shirt and her husband, Jeffrey Smith, coming out of the shower in the bedroom.

with a fractured wrist, strained neck and bruises on her body and face. Mr and Mrs Smith were childhood sweethearts who had known each other since she was 12. Their relationship had been going through a rocky patch for some time before the attack and Mrs French had been one of the few people she could talk to

about it, the court heard. "He deceived her grossly," said Lord Justice Beldam. When passing the original sentence, Judge Peter Lakin told Mrs Smith: "Only a custodial sentence can be justified. The attack was unprovoked and unreasonable and it was not just one blow. That type of sustained attack cannot be ignored."

Minister's 'victory' in fish quota deal

Stephen Bates in Brussels

TONY Baldry, the fisheries minister, emerged from prolonged talks in Brussels yesterday to claim victory in EU negotiations to set the size of next year's catch for British fishermen, after securing a deal which will increase the amount of fish caught by 23,000 tonnes.

drastically to conserve stocks, backed away from proposing severe reductions in many areas after a bruising year of confrontation with a number of member states. Filippo di Robilant, spokesman for the Italian fisheries commissioner, Emma Bonino, said: "We should not talk like some ministers of being victorious. The fisheries council is not the equivalent of a football match."

fishing industry spokesman, said there were two vital objectives that quotas had to serve: economic survival of British fishing communities and the conservation of stocks. "Judged against these criteria, Baldry's description of last night's deal as a triumph is clearly unjustified."

Retrial of teenager ordered in Leah Betts case

Alan Watkins

A YOUNG man accused of being involved in the supply of the ecstasy tablet which killed Leah Betts will face a retrial next year, a court decided yesterday. Steven Packford, 18, of the London Borough of Havering, was found guilty of supplying ecstasy to Leah Betts in 1994.

during an 18th birthday party at her home. A jury failed to reach a verdict this week after a seven-day trial of the case. Stephen Smith, aged 15, of Basildon, Essex, was given a two-year conditional discharge yesterday after admitting the offence. The judge said the management of the nightclub where the ecstasy tablet was bought had a greater responsibility for the subsequent events than any of the young people

involved. Mr Justice Kay said there had been "willful blindness" among the staff of Raquel's night club in Basildon. The appointment of a man with a bad criminal record as head of security demonstrated how little effort had been made to stop drugs. The judge told Smith to go back to the community and warn youngsters how dangerous the drug was.

The weather in Europe



Forecast for the cities

Table with columns for city, temperature, and weather forecast for today and tomorrow. Cities listed include London, Manchester, Birmingham, etc.

Around the world

Table with columns for location, temperature, and weather forecast. Locations include London, New York, Tokyo, Sydney, etc.

European weather outlook

Summary of weather trends across Europe, mentioning high pressure over the British Isles and low pressure over the Atlantic, with forecasts for rain and snow.

Television and radio - Saturday

Programme listings for Saturday, including BBC 1, BBC 2, BBC World, and Sky channels, with times and descriptions of shows.

Television and radio - Sunday

Programme listings for Sunday, including BBC 1, BBC 2, BBC World, and Sky channels, with times and descriptions of shows.

Handwritten Arabic text at the bottom of the page.



Mother-to-be Pamela Graham, who asked for a vitamin supplement and was accidentally given a drug used on men with prostate problems, had to fight to discover how the mistake happened. PHOTOGRAPH: SAM MORGAN MOORE

'One mistake can be very serious. And the fact is that there appear to be an awful lot of mistakes' Julie Luscombe's solicitor

'In the past, these things would have been dealt with quietly. Now we have aggressive and public litigation' Brian Milstead, head of trust

'There will always be human error in hospital'

Stuart Millar assesses the claims and counter claims after a series of hospital incidents shakes a Cornish community

It was already the most notorious hospital in the country after a series of high-profile medical errors which have included a hypodermic needle being left inside a baby and a man being set alight on the operating table. But yesterday the crisis at Treliske hospital in Truro, Cornwall, deepened when the local health watchdog called for a full independent review of procedures amid accusations that public confidence in the health care it offers has been destroyed. The move by Cornwall community health council came after it emerged this week that a pregnant woman was accidentally given a drug normally used for treating men with prostate problems when she was taken to hospital suffering from stomach pains. Pamela Graham, aged 38, who is expecting her third child, was given Tamoxifen when she asked for folic acid, a vitamin supplement often taken by expectant mothers. At most other hospitals, this might have been regarded as an isolated incident and passed without comment. But it only served to underline the growing perception that there are deep-rooted problems at Treliske which cannot simply be written off as human error. The hospital became the focus of intense criticism when part of a hypodermic needle was left inside baby Ben Jones, who was born six weeks prematurely on Christmas Day 1994. He was given blood, lumbar puncture and swab tests when he was 10 days old, but the end of the needle broke off and was ignored by a doctor

Complaints

March 1993: Mary Field, 52, is admitted with severe headaches but is then sent home and told to take paracetamol. She dies the next day in the hospital car park from a brain haemorrhage. January 1995: Andrea Jones, mother of three-week-old Ben, finds part of a needle protruding from his back. The family receives substantial damages. January 1996: Valerie Tomlinson, 55, a nursing sister, takes part in an appendix operation without being qualified. She later takes early retirement. July 1995: Ray Rickard complains that his wife, Gwen, 68, was left to die of cancer "without dignity in a cubicle". He commits suicide six months later. September 1995: Frank Asford, 78, is set on fire on an operating table when a spirit-based fluid ignites, causing burns to his back and buttocks. "I went up like a Christmas pudding," he says. October 1996: Six-week-old Kieren Luscombe is given 10 times the correct dosage of morphine during a hernia operation. Long-term impact still unclear. December 1996: Pamela Graham, a pregnant mother of two, is given a drug used to treat male prostate problems after asking for folic acid, a dietary supplement

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Julie Luscombe and Kieren, given 10 times too much morphine. PHOTOGRAPH: SAM MORGAN MOORE

reaction provokes outrage. "It is a disgrace for them to say that it is us who are making them look bad, that they are the victims," said Julie Luscombe. "It is not them who have to live with the worry that their baby may have been permanently damaged. It is not them who have watched their baby nearly die because of somebody's mistake." She is now pursuing a claim against Treliske for both Kieren's ordeal and the trauma it caused her and her husband. Her solicitor, Philip Snell, is equally dismissive. His desk is laden with dozens of medical negligence claims he is pursuing against the hospital. "It may well be that the people at the hospital feel they do a very good job. But because of the nature of their work, one mistake can be very serious. And the fact is that there appear to be an awful lot of mistakes." Pamela Graham yesterday welcomed the call for an inquiry. According to Adrian Hickman, a medical injuries specialist she consulted, the family has never been interested in receiving compensation. "Their only concern has been to find out how this mistake happened and to make sure it is not allowed to happen again." Mr. Hickman, who is also a member of the community health council, believes that agreeing to an independent inquiry is the only way the hospital will be able to change its fortunes. "I accept that thousands of patients are treated perfectly successfully at Treliske, but they cannot be offered up as an excuse for treating anybody badly. There have been many high-profile cases and this has now become a vicious circle. The only way that circle can be broken is an independent inquiry. If that doesn't happen, my concern is that these issues will continue to happen and will be swept under the carpet."

Rifkind accuses China of treaty breach

Plan to scrap Hong Kong elected legislature provokes thinly veiled threats from Britain

China was accused of breaching its treaty obligations. "There is no justification for us to replace a legislature elected openly and fairly by more than 1 million Hong Kong people," said the Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, in a statement brimming with veiled but unmistakable threats. The Chinese ambassador to Britain, Jiang Enxi, was summoned by Mr Rifkind late on Thursday for what officials described as a "robust" statement of the British position. Mr Jiang said Britain should "face reality". Mr Rifkind hinted heavily at wider pressure on Beijing. "We will work closely with the United States, the European Union and other international partners in monitoring observance of provisions of the joint declaration in Hong Kong," he said. The US has made it clear that, in its view, the provisional legislature is "unwise, unjustified and unnecessary". Britain raised the possibility of an appeal to the International Court of Justice in the Hague, but would only do so with China's consent. Mr Rifkind also announced six-monthly reports to Parliament with special reference to human rights. These would be available to United Nations treaty-monitoring bodies. Today's naming of the provisional legislature will give Hong Kong two rival law-making bodies, as well as two rival sources of executive authority: the governor, Chris Patten, and his China-appointed successor, shipping magnate Tung Chee-hwa. Fearful of prosecution by British authorities, who consider the new legislature to be illegitimate, the new 60-member assembly will meet in China until the handover. "Tomorrow will be a very black, dark day for Hong Kong," said Emily Lam, a member of a legislature elected in September but which China plans to disband. Mr Rifkind accused China of violating the 1984 Joint Declaration, a Sino-British accord that was referred to pointedly as "binding". "A body chosen by a hand-picked 'electorate' of 400 is not, in any reasonable sense, a legislature constituted by elections," as required by the Joint Declaration, the statement went on. China claims Britain is to blame because it went ahead with political reforms in the colony in 1982 without the consent of Beijing, a step which it says violated the accord. Beijing yesterday underlined its disdain for foreign criticism with an announcement that Hollywood stars who had challenged China's policies in Tibet would be barred from the region. These include the director Martin Scorsese, who is making a film about the Dalai Lama that has enraged Beijing.

Sagan, man who brought Cosmos to earth, dies

CARL SAGAN, the relentlessly enthusiastic American astronomer who spent much of his life attempting to convince his fellow terrestrials that we are not alone in the universe, died in Seattle yesterday after a two-year battle with cancer. Sagan, who was aged 62, was best known for presenting the 1980 television series Cosmos, which awakened a generation to the mystery of life's origins and established the catchphrase "billions and billions of stars". Though he was most celebrated for popularising esoteric scientific ideas, he was also a dedicated researcher, responsible for several significant discoveries. These included showing that the surface of Venus is too hot to support life. Sagan last year received a bone marrow transplant after being diagnosed as having a form of cancer known as preleukemia syndrome. He died of pneumonia at Seattle's Fred Hutchinson cancer research centre. After arguing for years that there was a strong probability that life existed elsewhere in the universe, he was thrilled when NASA scientists claimed earlier this year that they had discovered evidence of life in a meteorite from Mars. "It has to be one of the 10 most important discoveries in the history of the human race," he said. "This discovery serves to increase my sense of the magnitude of the universe." Sagan, who was born in New York, taught astronomy at Harvard in the 1960s before moving to Cornell University in 1968 to establish a laboratory for planetary studies. He helped design experiments for NASA and studied data from missions to other planets. A sworn enemy of "pseudoscience" — believers in UFOs and paranormal phenomena — he was a confirmed atheist. "I would lose my integrity if I accepted a belief system that did not stand up to sceptical scrutiny," he said recently. He won the Pulitzer Prize for literature in 1978 for The Dragons of Eden: Speculations on the Evolution of Human Intelligence. A companion book for his television series spent 70 weeks on the New York Times bestsellers list.



Carl Sagan... 'billions and billions of stars' catchphrase

During the course of the evening, the invisible connection between the crime rate and the tax rate becomes apparent. Tax rates are crime rates — records of thefts committed by the IRS against the vulnerably affluent.

The Week, page 15

Victory
ta dead

News in brief

Youth guilty of knife attack

A TEENAGE gang member was warned by a judge he faced "many years in jail" after he was found guilty yesterday of a near fatal attack on the husband of Barbara Mills, Director of Public Prosecutions.

Dockers reject 'final' offer

A MASS meeting of Liverpool dockers yesterday unanimously rejected an "ultimate closing offer" from the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company, a £28,000 severance payment and improved pension for each of the 329 men fired for not crossing a picket line 15 months ago, or the chance to apply for up to 40 jobs.

Police to contest damages

SOUTH Yorkshire police intend to contest a £200,000 damages award granted last week to the half-brother of a man who died in the Hillsborough disaster. The insurers for the force yesterday lodged an appeal against a High Court ruling that John McCarthy, aged 35, should be compensated for post-traumatic stress disorder following the 1989 FA Cup semi-final, in which 96 people were killed.

Break for terrorists

MORE THAN 100 terrorists will be released from Northern Ireland's jails to spend Christmas with their families, the Government announced last night. A total of 92 republicans and loyalists will be freed from the Maze prison on Monday to spend between seven and 10 days with their families.

Jail for 'record' driver

A MOTORIST who in 1994 was credited with having set the record of 158mph for a speeding offence was jailed for four months yesterday for driving while still banned for the speeding offence.

PC Nigel Brown

AN article which appeared in the Guardian February 10 1992 entitled "Jewish officer ready to quit Met over anti-Semitism" reported allegations made by PC Nigel Brown that he had been forced to leave the Metropolitan Police Force as a result of his colleagues' anti-Semitic behaviour. The Guardian accepts that the allegations are false and that the report, based on a report from a news agency, shocked and hurt Mr Brown's colleagues.

Correction

BATH University, which achieved one of the biggest improvements in research ratings in the funding councils' 1996 assessment exercise, and Royal Holloway College, University of London, which also did well, were omitted from yesterday's table of top universities. Bath (66 per cent of staff in grade 5 and 7 departments) comes 6th and Royal Holloway (46 per cent) joint 13th.

Miracles, television, Nigel Slater in the kitchen, chocolates, toys...and an old man with a beard. Life's guide to the perfect Christmas. THE FIRST SUNDAY PAPER, AND THE MOST ORIGINAL. The Observer

Late night habits of the young Ken Clarke, and all that modern jazz



The late-night man... Kenneth Clarke recording his programme at the Jazz FM studios

Ken Clarke Arts Correspondent

FORGET the Spice Girls praising Margaret Thatcher and Tony Blair re-creating Edie. Now it's the turn of the heavyweights. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Kenneth Clarke, includes Charlie Mingus, Thelonius Monk and Charlie Parker in his list of musical favourites for an hour-long Boxing Day programme on Jazz FM, which broadcasts to London and the North-west.

again, to see if there are still any late-night people in London. His early years in the Commons left him with more time to indulge his enthusiasm for jazz. "When I was a bit younger, with the House of Commons packing up at 10 o'clock, it was a great time to move on to Ronnie Scott's, stay there

til the end - two o'clock in the morning - do my red boxes and then get back to the office the next morning." When he is away from home he still has time to stay up late. "When I'm abroad I still go to jazz clubs because there are no red boxes and I can stay up at night."

He first started listening to jazz as "a cheery way of having a drink and meeting girls" in Nottingham. The first record he bought was Louis Armstrong's Potato Head Blues, which he describes as a great classic. "I'm a modernist really," says the Chancellor, going on to play Charlie Parker's Now's the Time, In Walked Bud by Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers, and Better

Ken's sounds

- Cottontail: The Duke Ellington Orchestra. Potato Head Blues: Louis Armstrong and the Hot Five. Now's the Time: Charlie Parker Quintet. Double Talk: Fats Navarro. Lover Man: Billie Holiday. In Walked Bud: Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers (featuring the Marsalis brothers). Rhythm-a-ning: Thelonius Monk. Saturday Night at the Cosmos: George Adams and Don Pullen Quintet. Better Git it in Your Soul: Charles Mingus.

Millennium exhibition loses its chief

Departure points up growing doubts on financial viability

Ken Clarke

THE political in-fighting surrounding the Greenwich Millennium Exhibition intensified yesterday when Barry Hartop, chief executive of Millennium Central, the operating company for the celebrations, stood down.

pointed to Millennium Central only on a three-month secondment from the Welsh Development Agency, he had said he expected to see the project through to completion.

Westminster sources were last night hinting that the agency was unwilling to take Mr Hartop - whose salary at Millennium Central was paid by British Airways - back into its employment.

In a further development, it emerged that the original plan to run the exhibition as a private sector partnership has been abandoned. It is now thought it will run as a public sector project, with one share held by a minister, probably

Roger Freeman, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. The change is designed to enable the Government to use National Lottery money through the commission to underwrite the project.

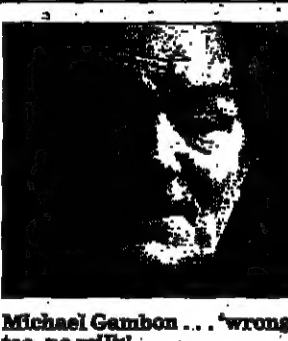
until we see a reasonable budget we're not going to commit ourselves." It is the latest in a series of blows to the celebrations. Doubt was cast on the viability of the exhibition two weeks ago when Mr Cunningham said that a Labour government would not underwrite the project with a blank cheque. Mr Cunningham has expressed fears that the cost, originally put at £500 million, could be £1 billion.

Dahling, these cucumber sandwiches are really a bit thick

Jan Katz in New York

MICHAEL Gambon glanced disapprovingly at his tea cup. "Can you imagine? Jasmine tea in lukewarm water without any milk?"

Player's Club, the dozen or so British thespians gathered for "an old-fashioned English tea" surveyed the nibbles - Danish pastries, petits fours and inch-thick cucumber sandwiches - with equal distaste.



Michael Gambon... 'wrong tea, no milk'



Stephanie Beacham... 'Ma, homesick? I prefer Malibu'

David Hare's Skylight, Elaine Paige (Sunset Boulevard), Fiona Shaw (The Westland) and David Threlfall (The Rehearsal). The guests at the tea were described as "homesick Brits of Broadway" but not all appeared to share the sentiment. "I miss Malibu terribly," said Stephanie Beacham, best known for her role as Dynasty's Sabra Felt. "I miss palm trees and surfer dudes."

Edwin Booth, the 19th century American actor who founded the Players' Club to emulate London's Garrick. Nibbling a cucumber sandwich - "munch too thick" - Ms Paige said she missed English TV and world news. In the US, "they don't have any interest in anywhere else". She enjoyed playing to Broadway audiences, however. "They're more volatile than in the West End and not afraid of showing their emotions. They let out shrieks, which a British audience would never do."

Millionaire's daughter put suffocated body in freezer while suffering from depression

Mother who killed baby is given probation

THE daughter of a millionaire who put a pillow over the head of her new-born son was yesterday put on probation for three years after pleading guilty to infanticide. Emma Gifford, 24, daughter of retired Bank Organisation chief executive Michael Gifford, killed the baby hours after giving birth in secret at her flat in South Kensington, London, the Old Bailey was told. She then went to work in a florist and later placed the body in a freezer.

reacted with overwhelming sympathy to Ms Gifford's "tragic" predicament. A spokeswoman for the Family Planning Association said the "singular and extreme case" highlighted the isolation and vulnerability women can feel in an unplanned pregnancy.

She gave birth in the bathroom of her flat early on April 8. The baby appeared to be coughing and not very well. She took him into the living room and tried to breast feed him, before both she and the baby fell asleep.

Passing sentence, the Recorder of London, Sir Lawrence Verner, said: "In a situation such as this the law does not wish to punish. The law wishes to help because help is still required. The circumstances of this birth could not have been more lonely for you and what occurred immediately afterwards, although it must of course cause you great remorse and does I am sure, is not something which should be allowed to cloud your life for the whole of the future." The court heard Ms Gifford had suffered from depression since the age of 13, after an unhappy childhood caught between an alcoholic mother and an absent father. She confessed to police on September 18 this year, five months after the death. Family support groups

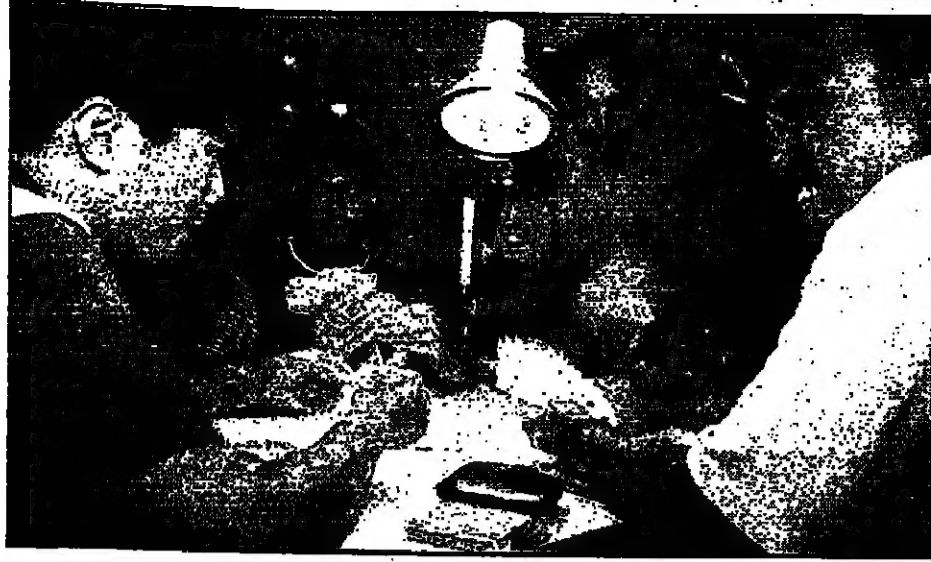
'Case emphasises need to make sure young know of agencies to help' Centres, which provides contraception and counselling to young people, said: "This is clearly a truly tragic case. It must be horrendous to give birth alone." The court heard that Ms Gifford told nobody about the baby until her brother found the body days after the death. William Boyce, prosecuting, said Ms Gifford, from Ashford, Kent, had suffered the trauma of giving up for adoption a first child, born just 14 months before.

Mr Boyce said: "She felt as though she had no option. She didn't know what to do. So she placed a flannel, which she had used to clean the child, over his face and put a pair of her boyfriend's pyjama bottoms over his head, and covered his head with a pillow for a couple of minutes and then went away and was physically sick." Ms Gifford then dressed and went to work. When she returned she removed the pillow. She then rang her brother, Christopher, who came to collect her "and unknowingly the child because she had it with her" and drove her to the family home in Kent for the night. The next day she returned to the flat, which her father had provided for her, and placed the child's body in the freezer. Police had found insufficient evidence on the cause of death to bring charges of infanticide against Ms Gifford before her full confession.



Emma Gifford leaving the Old Bailey: 'She didn't know what to do'

Handwritten text in Arabic script: "مكتبة الامم المتحدة"



Bets are off as triads hit Macao

Andrew Higgins reports on a shooting which has thrown the usually peaceful Portuguese colony into a state of turmoil

A SURVIVOR of Portugal's vicious colonial war in Mozambique, Lt-Col Manuel Antonio Apolinario, took two bullets in the head at the wheel of a new office car parked between Christmas trees and lights.

He was shot at pointblank range with a People's Liberation Army-issue handgun — the third person in less than a week gunned down by motorcycle hitmen in Europe's oldest Asian outpost.

A tiny Portuguese enclave across the Pearl River delta from Hong Kong, Macao is usually described as a sleepy, shabby and sometimes seedy gambling haven on the coast of China.

But it has suddenly become dangerous, as the fly-blown charm of casinos and clubs mutates into something more sinister. Col Apolinario was shot on the Praia Grande, a once elegant boulevard which bears the scars of a flawed economic boom.

He had just knocked off work at Macao's Gambling Inspection and Co-ordination Directorate, housed on the 18th floor of a grubby tower block shared with the Mona Lisa Sauna and Lost City Night Club.

"On paper the Portuguese do not give up control of

Macao until 1999 but in reality they have already lost control to the triads," said Ng Kuok-cheung, a social worker and sole voice of dissent in a docile legislature. "Hundreds of millions of dollars are at stake. The gangs know the police have lost control. It is very simple: they are no longer afraid of anything."

It is all a long way from the Macao of folklore and postcards, where gold-toothed pensioners pump coins into rickety one-armed bandits. The real money, and much of the trouble, now lies elsewhere — in "junket tours" and "VIP rooms" reserved for hardcore high-rollers from Taiwan, Thailand and further afield on all-expenses-paid, all-needs-met, gambling blow-outs.

Many end up at the Lisboa Hotel Casino, a rambling concrete complex whose architecture combines the aesthetics of a public toilet with the splendor of a nifty villa. It was outside this establishment that attackers recently ambushed a casino worker, chopped off his right hand and scalped him.

Since the start of the year, Macao has suffered 14 bombings and a string of brutal killings. By a fluke, Col Apolinario survived and is recovering under police protection



Growing violence has transformed the fly-blown charm of Macao's clubs and casinos into something more sinister

PHOTOGRAPHS: RICHARD BAKER

at a hilltop hospital overlooking Macao's main gambling district. The first bullet tore through his cheek and ripped a hole in his jaw. A second missed his spinal chord by millimetres.

"They wanted to kill me. It is impossible to find out who did it, but I want to find out why," he told a friend in hospital last week. "Why did someone not come and talk to me first? In the past they always came to talk."

As head of Macao's police intelligence during the 1980s, he had frequent contact with a brutal but structured criminal underworld. Today, the old rules no longer apply.

"Macao City of Fear. The Peace is Finished," screamed the local Portuguese language tabloid, *Macao Hoje*. Less alarmist but perhaps more alarming was a statement by the Xinhua news agency, China's de facto embassy. Usually content to applaud Portugal for not copying Britain's *Chris Patten*, Xinhua said the mayhem could upset the transition and demanded tough action.

Even mobsters have voiced outrage. The day after Col Apolinario was shot, the editor of *Macao Hoje*, Joao Severino, received a telephone call inviting him to a luxury beach hotel: the mob wanted to talk to his side of the story.

"Everyone was blaming the secret societies and they were very upset," said Mr Severino. He was met by two reputed mobsters and the representative of another group. They denied ordering

the assassination attempt against Col Apolinario was the most serious attack against a senior Portuguese official in Macao since the murder in 1949 of the then governor, Joao Ferralra do Amaral. He was beheaded after expelling Chinese customs agents.

Col Apolinario's misfortune could also be part of a bigger

game. As Macao prepares to return to China in 1999, loan-sharks and pimps are not the only people eager to mark out their territory.

Among those muscling in is a mainland Chinese firm run by the State Security Bureau. When STDM, the casino conglomerate, rebuffed business overtures from the Chinese company, a bomb went off outside a hotel over which it had been negotiating.

STDM, or Sociedade de Tur-

ismo e Diversoes de Macao, has held an exclusive franchise to Macao's gambling industry since 1962 and last year contributed nearly 2400 million in taxes. But it is no longer seen as invincible: its monopoly comes up for renewal in 2001.

The proliferation of VIP rooms to service junkie gamblers — who now account for

well over half of all revenue — has already loosened its grip. "Who provides croupiers and other staff but must work with outsiders to keep big spenders coming in. People take it for granted that if there is violence it must be related to casinos. This is just speculation," said Louis Ng of STDM. "We are just a commercial entity. We really hope the authorities can do something to stop all this."

Macao's Portuguese administration, staffed with veterans of Portugal's colonial wars in Africa and known more for long lunches than long-term planning, has retreated into a bunker of shell-shocked silence. "The Portuguese here think they are still in the jungle in Africa dealing with Pygmies," said one veteran resident.

It took a lunchtime murder outside police headquarters to stir the authorities into action. Macao's two separate and often feuding forces, the Judiciary Police and the Public Security Police, were ordered to form joint armed patrols of casinos.

Promises from China of security co-operation have aroused Portuguese suspicions of a disguised early takeover. "Who gets advantage from all this violence? Who would benefit most from having people say that the Portuguese police are not up to the job?" asked one official.

When China takes over Macao in 1999 it will face few of the difficulties it will confront in Hong Kong when British rule pulls down the flag next summer: a hostile legislature, a Chinese political elite, a boisterous media.

'Hundreds of millions of dollars are at stake. The gangs know the police have lost control. It is simple: they are no longer afraid'

Penny drops in Albania as savings scam collapses

Jonasa Robertson in Tirana

HUNDREDS of thousands of Albanians will be left penniless by a pyramid savings scam which was on the brink of collapse in Tirana last night.

Crowds clashed with police on Thursday, after the woman behind the fraud, known only as Sudja, failed to make the huge promised interest payments to savers. Families besieged her offices again yesterday.

Sudja, an Albanian gypsy and former shoe factory worker, tempted hundreds of thousands of Albanians to give her their life savings by offering 50 per cent interest. The pyramid scheme used new savers' deposits to pay the interest.

In the less developed post-communist countries of eastern Europe, such as Russia and Romania, such scams have ruined millions of naive savers. Now a size-

able number of the 3 million people in Albania, the poorest country in Europe, are about to become poorer still.

Sudja has failed to make payments for more than three weeks. Families marched from Sudja's office to Tirana's central Skanderbeg Square on Thursday to protest at the government's failure to intervene, but police beat them back. At least four people were detained.

"The police helped Sudja when we gave her our money. Now, when we try to take it, they only beat us," wept an old woman who was clutching a deposit slip.

Sudja, claiming she needs time to do her accounts, promised to reopen her office on Wednesday this week. On Thursday, when the office stayed shut, furious men smashed the windows and tried to tear down the iron bars.

One man said: "There is no money because the government used it to pay for

the elections. At least in Serbia people are allowed to demonstrate."

Flanked by police, Sudja finally leaned out of a fifth-floor window and told the crowd to be patient. She added that if she was harmed, no one would get their money.

Twenty people received a partial repayment after the demonstration. One said she would immediately return it in one of the eight other crooked schemes in operation.

Tension remains high, with most people blaming the government for the collapse of the company.

Casim Elhirt, the World Bank's representative in Tirana, said he did not know of another country where so much money had been invested in pyramid schemes.

The government has set up a parliamentary committee to investigate the country's nine money schemes, but its work has been kept secret.

News in brief

Nordic bikers convicted
A Hell's Angel and two members of affiliated gangs were convicted yesterday of murdering the leader of the rival Bandidos gang and attempting to kill his companions in an ambush in March at Copenhagen airport.

The jury also convicted a second Hell's Angel, but the court reversed the decision, opening the possibility of a new trial. Two other bikers were acquitted. — AP.

Fishermen freed
Italy said yesterday that Libya had decided to release four Italian fishermen held for four months and convicted this week of violating its territorial waters. — Reuters.

Nazi loot inquiry
Sweden said yesterday it would launch a formal investigation into allegations by the World Jewish Congress that looted Nazi gold from the second world war had found its way into official Swedish bank vaults. — Reuters.

Iraq holds 'spies'
Iraq said yesterday it had arrested a sabotage and espionage ring working for the CIA and that all had given full confessions. The CIA refused to comment. — AP.

Jail clampdown
Bangladesh strengthened security at prisons throughout the country yesterday to prevent further unrest as prisoners at two jails refused to end their strikes. — Reuters.

Negotiator faints
Italy's European commissioner Emma Bonino collapsed after 21 hours of negotiations on fishing quotas with EU ministers. Her spokesman said she fainted from exhaustion. — Reuters.

Kurd bases hit
Turkish warplanes and helicopter gunships have bombed two Turkish Kurdish rebel bases in northern Iraq, a military officer said yesterday. The raid was carried out on Thursday. — AP.

Religious police bring out the big sticks to beat vice in Kabul

FOOTBALL is out. So are waves and salutes, public signs of affection between men and women, paper bags, television — alcohol, of course — and all music except for the marching songs of the Taliban religious movement, which for nearly three months has tried to return the Afghan capital to the ways of the rough villages from which it grew.

At the Office for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice — a sort of religious police which has been issuing decrees against all things considered immoral by the Taliban — Maulvi Inayallah Baligh is still not satisfied.

Mr Baligh, the deputy minister for vice and virtue, wears the long-tailed turban of the Taliban although he is a career bureaucrat who performed the same duties under the previous Islamic government of Burhanuddin Rabbani, which was chased out of Kabul by the Taliban nearly three months ago.

"In the past this office talked, but it did not act. We are now prepared to cope with all immoralities," he said.

The youthful fighters of the Taliban, who career around Kabul in pick-up trucks with white flags flying, already enforce the call to Friday prayers by clubbing people into mosques.

Mr Baligh this week acted to increase worship every day of the week with a decree requiring shopkeepers to set aside places for prayer.

But his office focuses overwhelmingly on vice. Mr Baligh has 100 religious inspectors at his disposal in Kabul who are empowered to deliver instant judgments on those who offend the Taliban's strict dress code, or are discovered drinking, committing robbery, or having illicit sex — punishable by death for married people, 100 lashes for those who are single.

"They deal with these

"Whenever we catch them doing immoral things, we can do anything we want. We can execute them, we can kill them"

Suzanne Goldenberg (right) in Kabul talks to the man who is taking a hard line on enforcing the Taliban's moral code



Turkey to close casinos

Reuter in Ankara

TURKEY'S Islamist prime minister, Necmettin Erbakan, said yesterday the country's casinos would be closed and a public lottery discontinued because of concerns about their demoralising effect on Turkish society.

"They have begun to spread to every corner of Turkey like an illness," Mr Erbakan said before a cabinet meeting at which the future of the gaming industry was expected to be discussed.

The tourism ministry has been considering proposals to exclude Turks from gaming

establishments or to outlaw the sector entirely.

Government pressure for complete closure appeared to be gathering earlier this week when Tansu Ciller, the foreign minister, said she wanted the country's 76 casinos shut down.

The current initiative is the culmination of a series of restrictions on opening hours and dress imposed by the Islamist-led government since coming to power in June. It has had limited success in imposing a previous order to exclude Turks from casinos.

Tourism ministry officials say work on plans to limit casinos to three designated areas is continuing despite

the initiative. An island near Istanbul and various tourist resorts are among recommended locations.

Gaming industry officials have protested strongly against the plans. They say gambling will continue in illegal casinos, or abroad, with no tax benefits to the country. Government revenues from casinos totalled about 247 million in 1996, and 261 million in 1998 up to mid-November, according to tourism ministry figures.

Concern in government circles about the social impact of casinos has been exacerbated recently by media reports of suicides and family hardship linked to gambling debts.

crimes when they capture them, exactly at that time," he said. "Whenever we catch them doing immoral things, we can do anything we want. We can execute them, we can kill them."

But they are less harsh with engaged couples who may forget themselves and hold hands in public. "If we catch them, we separate them, and then we give some slaps to the boy's face."

Women must wear the head-toe shroud of the chaderei, with a ill-gree panel over the eyes. Men must grow beards and are advised to cover their heads with woolen skullcaps, embroidered hats or the flowing turbans favoured by the Taliban.

Government workers who ignore warnings to grow beards face dismissal and Mr Baligh said six justice ministry employees have been sacked so far. Other civil servants have been sacked for not attending prayers at the office.

Mr Baligh said he is confident that Kabul's 150,000 working women will observe the ban on work, unless they are employed in hospitals.

Mr Baligh's police have discovered no drinkers so far, only caches of alcohol. No adulterers have been appre-

hended and no woman has suffered the official punishment of 29 lashes for showing her face in public. "So far we have not given real punishment, only beating with small sticks," he said, swishing his hand through the air with relish.

But his inspectors have had unauthorised support from Taliban foot soldiers. Last week, Radio Staria — the renamed Radio Afghanistan — announced that 230 women had been beaten in a single day for violating a ban on appearing in public without wearing chaderei.

Mr Baligh protested. "In fact, we are in charge. The Taliban are not in charge, but they interfere in our task. We have had to warn them not to interfere."

But there are signs that Kabul's religious police are moving towards a harder line. On Wednesday, the supreme court authorised the first execution according to the Islamic law of retribution. At a football stadium in central Kabul, hardened fighters watched in evident satisfaction as a bereaved man shot dead the killer of his pregnant wife and children.

Although the restrictions are unbearable for educated people, many are prepared to

No future for rebels trapped in past

Peru's 'post-modern' guerrillas draw their inspiration from history but ignore contemporary facts, writes **Richard Gott**

THERE IS a long and honourable tradition of guerrilla activity in Latin America that has ebbed and flowed over decades and centuries. Independence from Spain in the early 1900s would never have been successful without the innumerable guerrilla armies that helped to put in place a new world order. Oligarchic, unrepresentative and authoritarian regimes have run most of the continent ever since.

More than a century later, in the 1960s and 1970s, guerrilla groups sprang up everywhere in the (usually) vain hope of repeating the success of the Cuban revolution. So the Peruvian rebels that have resurged in Lima with such a flourish in the past few months have plenty of fore-revolutionary credentials by

their willingness to refer back to the triumphs of their predecessors. Tupac Amaru himself sparked off a rebellion in 1780 that reached from the countryside into every Spanish town in the Andes. In the 1960s, Cuban-backed guerrillas involving the images of Che Guevara tried to do the same, not just in Peru but all over the continent.

Yet today's revolutionaries seem to owe more to current abstract theories about culture than to a detailed consideration of historical example. In the 1990s in Peru, and also earlier in Mexico, we have been seeing the emergence of post-modern guerrilla movements that are rather different from those that appeared before. The iconography may look the same — the masks, the weapons, the red flags — but the ideology is different.

The aim of these armed bands is not to seize power and effect a revolution in society through armed struggle, defeating regular armies through guerrilla warfare. That would be a hopeless task. Their more simple purpose, through the weapons of imitation, parody, and pastiche, is to cast doubt on the viability of the current neo-conservative ideology that spread its suffocating blanket over the entire continent. Through their manipulation

one knows that it is many years since Fidel Castro's regime gave anyone a helping hand. They claim to be fighting "imperialism", yet in the absence of the Soviet Union, which was once able to provide a counter-weight to the regional superpower, there is no possibility that local resistance movements will be allowed to survive.

Guerrilla means "a small war" yet today's rebels are hardly capable of sustaining a traditional small war. Counter-insurgency techniques are infinitely more developed than they were 30 years ago. Much of Latin America's rural hinterland has been drained of population and small anti-government armed groups can only survive as local irritants in obscure areas. While immense slums can spawn endless recruits for rebel groups, there is no common culture of the kind that Islam provides for the revolutionaries of the Middle East. Even Peru's Sendero Luminoso has been hampered into the ground.

Nor is there now much opportunity to conduct the classic revolutionary war where the "small war" guerrilla sparks off a larger conflagration. In the case of Mexico, the localised guerrilla outbreak in the rural areas of Chiapas, on Mexico's southern border with Guatemala, failed to ignite much activity elsewhere.

The grounds for dissatisfaction are legion, and groups like Tupac Amaru have no difficulty in finding recruits. But the cards are stacked against them. Fujimori may get a bad press for closing down the country's congress, but he has received firm international support and remains popular at home.

When Mexico's political system breaks down, it will be to the benefit of the right, not left

of the "propaganda of the deed" they hope to destabilise the governments of their countries and, from the ensuing chaos, to set them off on a new path. These guerrillas use the same words and rhetoric as their forerunners, but their slogans have mostly lost their meaning. They still invoke the Cuban example, yet every

the Zapatistas have been using the 20th century peasant leader Emiliano Zapata as their emblematic figurehead, in much the same way that the Peruvians have been localising the 18th century rebel Tupac Amaru, but these indigenous invocations have had little effect. The notoriously compromised Mexican left has not been able to use the guerrilla challenge to unite its own political forces against the government.

When the old and creaking political system in Mexico does break down it will be to the benefit of the right rather than the left. The outlook in Peru is equally pessimistic. Peru in the 1990s has been emerging from a 25-year period of crisis in which its traditions, its political institutions and society itself have been dramatically transformed. The country in the process has tried every kind of political recipe, including socialism imposed by

Fujimori may get a bad press for closing down the congress but he remains popular

military fiat and populism enforced through charismatic corruption. Springing from nowhere, and without party label or baggage, [President Alberto] Fujimori has imposed the standard economic programme of the now global world order. As everyone now recognises, this makes the rich richer and the poor poorer.

The rebels' only real hope of securing change is through martyrdom, and the Japanese government — still uncomfortable with its role as a global political player — has been moving heaven and earth to prevent this. The original rebellion of Tupac Amaru was drowned by the Spaniards in blood. Hundreds of Indians were executed in the morning and in the afternoon. It was a terrible warning, and there was silence for a generation. But then the Spaniards were gone. Richard Gott is the author of *Guerrilla Movements in Latin America*.

Leader comment, page 8

People of Zaire have mastered art of getting by

Ruaridh Nicoll in Kinshasa finds the world of politics very far from the appalling misery of daily life

IT IS the end of term. The teachers hover in the laboratory at the Institut Vélizy, a high school specialising in science on the outskirts of Kinshasa. The room is dimly lit and very hot, just a shack with a long bench of smashed tiles running down the centre.

One of the teachers points towards the ceiling where the equatorial sky can be seen beyond. "When it rains the teacher cannot stand at the blackboard," he says. Even Zaire's leaders corruption cannot slow time and with each of the past six years, life has become more difficult for the people who teach here. The world may be watching Zaire, expecting its disintegration, and President Mobutu Sese Seko may have returned after a long absence, full of promises to fight and win the war in the east. But in the school these things are just politics, nothing compared to facing the daily evil.

Each morning Andre Mashikote, the school's attendant, turns his borrowed face to the ledger on his desk. A column falls alongside the names of the 1,200 students; his pen runs down, checking for those without a fee. Then he walks to the classrooms where between 80 and 100 students sit three to a desk. There are no pens, books or folders and the teacher stops as the attendant walks in.

Mr Mashikote calls the names of the children on his list — kids whose parents have failed to pay the \$3 monthly fee — and then escorts them from the school grounds. "They come the next day because they want to learn, but since they have no financial means they are not allowed in," he says. "It is very sad, they stand around until the classes are over." Mr Mashikote cuts a miserable figure in his plywood cubbyhole.

That schools used to have facilities like a laboratory tells a tale. And the rebels attacked there has been a great rise in nationalistic feeling. The president appears like the man who has saved the country's integrity in the past, so now the people look to him.

In the east, the war seems to have ground to a halt. The rebels' advance has stalled, despite Zairean forces falling back to the regional capital of Kisangani. There is a vast "grey area" between the armies, awash with anything up to 2,000 refugees. Meanwhile the good people of Kinshasa get on with their lives. It seems the only thing worse than Zaire disintegrating is that it might remain the same. Lema Kiensidna, a father of 11, holds some plants with which he is going to make a stomach potion that he hopes to sell. He used to be a tailor but people are too poor to ask for his services these days. "Everytime I have any money it is quickly gone," he says. "Now I don't have enough to feed my family or educate them." Asked how he copes, he shrugs. What he means is that he believes in the *debraoulaise* — the art of getting by.

gones. On the slopes of Binza Hill, stand the grey guts of a large half-built house. It is nicknamed the White Horse by Kinshasa's residents, who recognise the vast, bow front in the skeletal structure. Around it, beautiful homes in lush gardens spread away into the distance. The unfinished house belongs to the prime minister, Kerpo wa Danda.

It is almost impossible to describe the way this country operates. Foreigners are robbed by officials at the airport and \$130 for accreditation is placed in a folder marked "pour le ministre". But this is nothing to what the population have to put up with. "The soldiers are our enemy," says one resident. "They stop you, strip you naked and steal everything. Last week they even took my shirt."

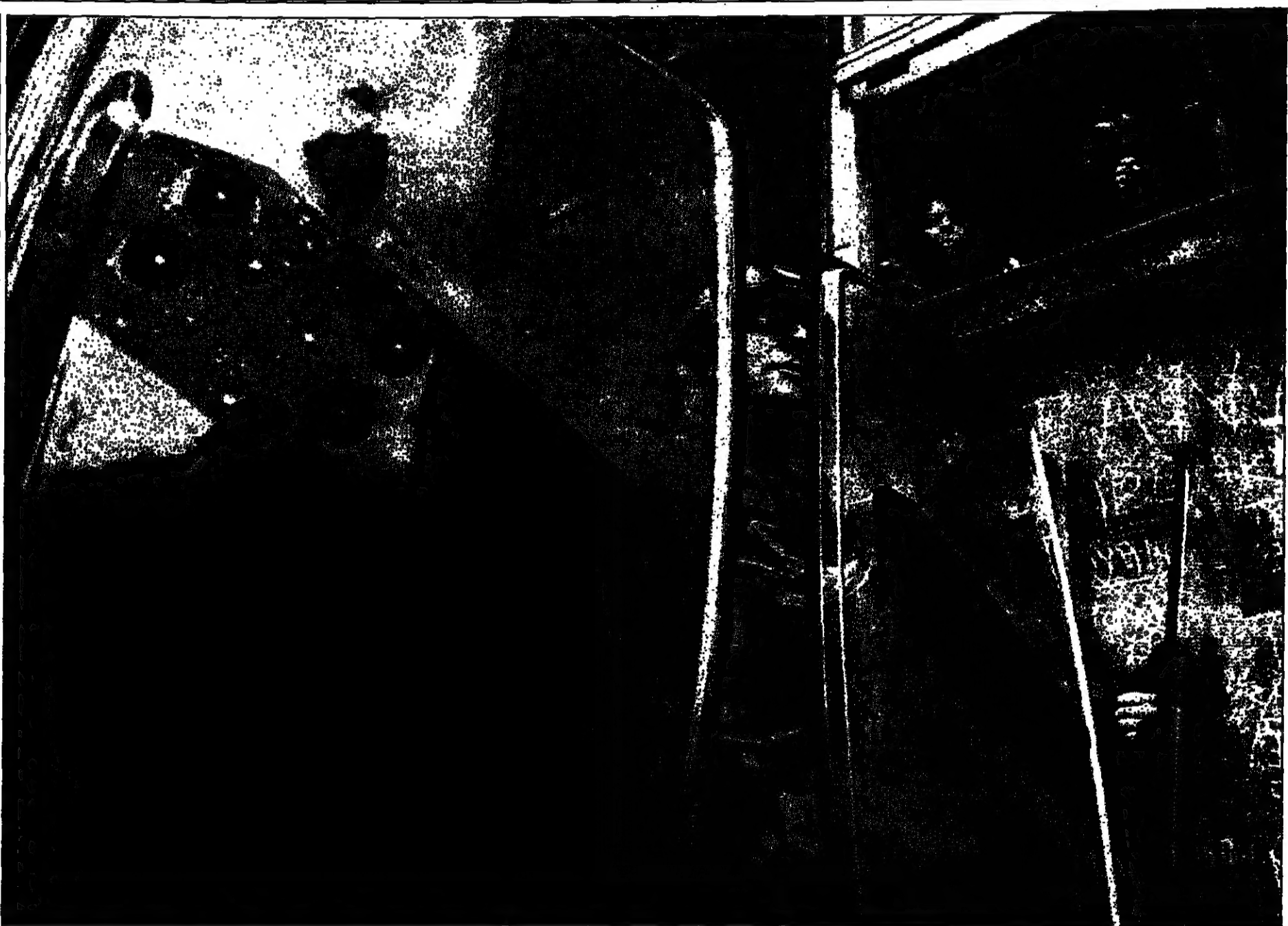
It is just the beginning. There are no human rights, the hospital barely functions, there is no transport and little communication. The American and the Portuguese ambassadors could only watch as the government sold half of a well-known avenue outside their embassies to a supermarket looking for parking space.

Yet the people endure, hospitable and friendly, and unwilling to criticise their president because it would be rude

'The situation here could never happen in another country. There would have been a bloody revolution'

to pick on a man who is ill with prostate cancer. There is laughter when people here talk of coups and revolution. "The situation here could never happen in another country," a Western diplomat says. "There would have been a bloody revolution. But these are quiet people, it is a country that is used to living away from power."

Mr Kamitatu-Massamba continues his analysis: "The population is living in indescribable misery, but since Rwanda and the rebels attacked there has been a great rise in nationalistic feeling. The president appears like the man who has saved the country's integrity in the past, so now the people look to him. In the east, the war seems to have ground to a halt. The rebels' advance has stalled, despite Zairean forces falling back to the regional capital of Kisangani. There is a vast "grey area" between the armies, awash with anything up to 2,000 refugees. Meanwhile the good people of Kinshasa get on with their lives. It seems the only thing worse than Zaire disintegrating is that it might remain the same. Lema Kiensidna, a father of 11, holds some plants with which he is going to make a stomach potion that he hopes to sell. He used to be a tailor but people are too poor to ask for his services these days. "Everytime I have any money it is quickly gone," he says. "Now I don't have enough to feed my family or educate them." Asked how he copes, he shrugs. What he means is that he believes in the *debraoulaise* — the art of getting by.



Riot police in Belgrade block the road to a bridge in the centre of the Serbian capital during a student protest before the rush hour yesterday. The tense stand-off coincided with the arrival of a delegation from the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe to investigate allegations by the opposition Zajedno coalition. PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID BRAUCHAU

Black English 'a language' says US school board

Richard Thomas in Washington

BLACK English, or "ebonics" — celebrated by rap artists and black activists — has been declared a second language by a California school board, opening the door to extra cash for bilingual teaching and provoking an immediate political row.

Arguing that phrases such as "he be walkin'" and "she done did it" are expressions from a language carved out by West African slaves, the Oakland district has ordered

schools to teach black children in their own tongue.

But with California embroiled in a legal civil war over the recently approved Proposition 209 — which would end affirmative action — the move is likely to heighten racial tension and fuel conservative opposition to the \$130 million (£76,000) already spent on bilingual education in the state.

The US justice department yesterday said it was poised to weigh into the affirmative action case in California, with President Clinton backing the department's view

that Proposition 209 was in breach of the US constitution.

Oakland education officials insisted, however, that the decision on ebonics was merely intended to underline the legitimacy of black culture, as well as to help African American children learn standard English. Teachers are to receive special training to help them bridge the language gap.

"When children come to school with whatever language — whether they are Filipino or Chinese or Hispanic — funds are available to support them," said the board president, Lucella Harrison.

"The African American community says: 'Why aren't our students given that money and support, if they are limited in English?'"

But there were fears that the board's radical stance could backfire and erode support for other, clearer-cut programmes. "In one sense, this is all we need," said Jim Lyons, director of the National Association for Bilingual Education. "Whenever bilingual education is raised in this way, there is a backlash."

Although Mr Lyons claimed the decision stemmed from legitimate anger from

members of the black community at the failure of the school system to recognise their culture, he said the linguistic basis of the new ruling was unsound.

"Ebonics is not a separate language, in the way Spanish is, although the rap movement has done a lot to accentuate the diversity in dialects," he said.

The two key differences between black English and standard English, according to linguists, are the use of "be" for a current activity — for example "she be eatin' lunch" — and the use of double negatives for emphasis, as in "I ain't got no food".

Oakland's black mayor, Elihu Harris, disowned the decision, describing ebonics — a combination of "ebony" and "phonics" — as little more than slang. Mr Harris said he had been deluged with telephone calls from business leaders afraid that the board decision would discourage investment.

Nancy Gold, who oversees California's distribution of federal money for bilingual teaching, said requests for money for ebonics were unlikely to succeed, and that the scheme would have to be funded from existing budgets.

News in brief

Mystery gunmen threaten to murder Tajikistan hostages

UNDENTIFIED gunmen took 23 people hostage on a highway in Tajikistan yesterday, including seven United Nations military observers and two other UN employees. The kidnapers demanded the release of the brother of a Tajik commander and a safe corridor from the Afghan border to the headquarters of their leader. UN sources said they threatened to kill the hostages and explode 30 bombs in the capital, Dushanbe, unless their demands have been met by tomorrow at 2pm local time. Among the other hostages are members of a Tajik com-

Yeltsin 'back on the bottle'

RUSSIA'S former security chief, Alexander Lebed, said in a television interview yesterday that President Boris Yeltsin had ignored his doctors' advice to avoid alcohol. "He has begun to drink," said Mr Lebed, sacked by Mr Yeltsin as security chief in October. "But he is not permitted to drink." Mr Yeltsin said yesterday he would return to his Kremlin desk on Monday, adding: "The country needs an active and energetic president, especially now." Asked about Mr Lebed's remarks, a spokesman said: "We do not comment on such things." — Reuter.

Chechnia holds 'killers'

Chechen security forces have detained several men suspected of killing six Red Cross workers in the separatist republic on Tuesday. Chechnia's top security official said yesterday. Abu Movsayev refused to say how many people had been detained, name them or say what evidence had implicated them, the Itar-Tass news agency reported. He has accused Russian secret services of organising the killings. — AP.

Jakarta decree

President Suharto, in a decree released by the state secretary yesterday, ordered Indonesians and local companies earning more than 100 million rupiah (\$26,000) a year to donate 2 per cent of their profits to the poor. — Reuter.

Healing process

Germany and the Czech Republic yesterday concluded nearly two years of talks on a joint declaration to heal the wounds between the two countries. The declaration ex-

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Carl Sagan

Beyond the planets

NO OTHER scientist of our century has matched the great burst of imagination, productivity and prolific accessibility of Professor Carl Sagan, the brilliant American astronomer, educator and dissident, who has died aged 62 after a long battle with leukaemia. At a crucial phase in its history, with its philosophy floundering and long-term survival balanced on a biological knife edge, humanity has lost one of its most important and articulate guides.

Trained both as an astronomer and biologist, Sagan was a true polymath, able to do much more than illuminate the place of mankind in the universe. He could carry the mind of everyman into orbit with a comet, into the far reaches of space to perceive the probability and structure of other life-forms, to touch and understand the planets in their individual intricacy and beauty and, with equal impact, unravel the atmospheric and climatic consequences of nuclear war and other bleak human follies.

When firmly on the earth, his lectures reached beyond specialists' aspects of astronomy or the origins of life — on earth or elsewhere — to the many key and complex issues facing humanity and its fragile blue planet. He spoke with an authority, precision and power that was individualistic, even dramatic, but which was so effective and memorable that he engendered extremes of academic admiration and envy. Far from being a publicist, as jealous voices have claimed, he was from the outset a world-level scientist. And, as his 1980 *Cosmos* television series will confirm far into the future, he was a pub-

lic educator of great importance. He wrote, co-authored or edited considerably more than 20 books with worldwide distribution. He was the son of a Russian-born garment manufacturer and was born in New York City. His interest in astronomy was kindled in New Jersey high school and he graduated with a physics degree from the University of Chicago in 1954. His first works were published soon after and his doctorate, in astronomy and astrophysics, followed in 1960. He joined the faculty at Harvard in 1962. In 1968 he

Imaginative reaches into the possibilities of extra-terrestrial life were accompanied by biological experiments attempting to simulate the earth's early atmosphere

went to Cornell University in upstate New York where he set up a planetary studies laboratory. It was in the 1960s that he began studying the surface and atmosphere of Venus. There were many discrepancies between the accepted picture of a planet, then believed to have a cool surface, and other factors such as the high temperature emissions from its enveloping atmosphere. Sagan, bringing the notion of the "greenhouse gas effect" into currency, showed that existing hypotheses were wrong, and went on to explain that the planet must have a high surface temperature. His hypothesis resolved all conflicts and, although initially controversial, the calculation were eventually accepted and shown to be correct. During the 1960s spaceflight

was developing rapidly. With his interest reaching out to other planets, he was inevitably drawn into the American space programme. He played a leading role in the development and instrumentation of the Mariner, Viking, Voyager and Galileo spacecraft expeditions to the planets, achieving acclaim for his studies of windblown dust as an explanation of seasonal changes on Mars. It was Sagan who designed the imaginative var-croplon ornamental plate, describing the human form and the position of the earth in the solar system, which has

drawn harsh criticism. Yet his approach is carefully balanced. "In assessing evidence and in evaluating statistical estimates of the likelihood of extra-terrestrial intelligence, we may be at the mercy of our prejudices. At the present time there is no unambiguous evidence for even the most simple form of extra-terrestrial life, but the situation may change in the coming years. Whether we have been too optimistic or not optimistic enough, only the future will tell." Sagan's imaginative reaches into the possibilities of extra-terrestrial life were accompanied by biological experiments which, with more success than the earlier work of Miller and Urey, attempted to simulate the earth's early atmosphere and the creation of the chemistry of life. Irradiating a mixture of methane, ammonia and hydrogen sulphide he was able to produce amino acids and sugars, such as fructose and glucose, and nucleic acids, all common constituents of present day life forms. He showed that amino acids were produced and that, intriguingly, the experiments also produced traces of adenostone triphosphate (ATP), a compound of crucial importance in understanding the biochemistry of living cells. Although intrinsically successful, these experiments stressed the importance of planetary atmospheres in any life-producing process, and the detection of an atmosphere encouraged wild public speculation that the Mariner flights would produce evidence of life. In fact Mariner spacecraft could not do this. They were designed to study the planetary atmosphere and gather some information about the surface. The pictures of a

seemingly barren surface sent back to earth stimulated a massively negative press in America, a failure of understanding that changed Carl Sagan's life.

WITH a vigour and a seemingly insatiable appetite for controversy, he took on all-comers in a battle to educate the public in the exercise of reason, stressing the importance of science and imagination and the roles of astronomy, cosmology and biology in understanding mankind's place in the vastness of the universe. Later, as a matter of urgency, he sought to promote understanding of the human predicament on earth. In this he was, in a real sense, a partner of the biologists and ecologists Paul and Anne Ehrlich.



Carl Sagan... an articulate guide to the cosmos

PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN ANGLER

It was inevitable that, in the nuclear-stressed 1960s, his knowledge of planetary atmospheres and dynamics would play a central role in an analysis of nuclear weapon effects. The startling, indeed frightening outcome, published as *Nuclear Winter: Global Consequences of Multiple Nuclear Explosions* (1984) triggered a huge scientific controversy which remains unresolved. The notion that nuclear war would change climate and cripple world agriculture has had a salutary effect on political thinking. His popular books, including the 1976 Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Dragons of Eden: Speculations on the Evolution of Human Intelligence*, and the most recent *Pale Blue Dot: A Vision of the Human Future in Space* (1994) and *The Demon Haunted World* (1996). They stretch the imagination, but

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David Duncan Professor of Astronomy and Space Sciences at Cornell and had received awards from almost every country in the world, gained the prestigious Masursky Award of the American Astronomical Society. The citation speaks of "his extraordinary contributions to the development of planetary sciences... Many of the most productive planetary scientists working today are his present and former students and associates." That is the final scientific assessment of his huge stature. It is no less important that through his books, his great clarity of mind and amazing energy, he touched and enlarged all of us.

Anthony Tucker

Carl Sagan, scientist, born November 9, 1934; died December 20, 1996



Anne Bolt... copyright campaigner

Putting rights in the picture

ANNE Bolt, who has died aged 94, was a prolific photographer. Her subjects — Eleanor Roosevelt — whose career began with a chance purchase of a camera in a South American bar. She was also a journalist and a prime mover for copyright reform, gaining for photographers the same rights to ownership of their material as other creators, lost since John Ruskin and fellow artists in the 19th century ensured their relegation to second-class status. Elegant, graceful and always good company, she worked with profound but declared diligence on behalf of freelance journalists in general and photographers in particular as an active member of the National Union of Journalists. She was an unlikely trade unionist — a courtier by marriage, a peer and an ex-husband a diplomat — but only if she wrote the story too, and so she became that rare animal, a photographer who writes. Her work took her around the world, she compiled a much-used photo-library and made a name for herself in travel journalism. She pretended to be "a poor illiterate photographer who needed things explained in simple words", a useful device for a woman who was a singer. During the war, with

the forces entertainment organisation Ensa, she organised an all-women's concert party. She took it from Gibraltar through North Africa to Cairo. Her career change came in the early 1950s. She was in Brazil with her second husband, Graham Chivers, a diplomat, when he bought a camera from a barman for a second and gave it to Anne. She determined to become a photographer, spent a year at college, and joined the Hampstead News. Then, while planning a trip to Venezuela, she asked the Times if they would like a photo essay on the governments of the West Indies which started a long association with the area. On the same trip she went to photograph the Guahibo Indians, having secured a lift on the back of a padre's motor bike. The *Observer* graphic magazine was interested — but only if she wrote the story too, and so she became that rare animal, a photographer who writes. Her work took her around the world, she compiled a much-used photo-library and made a name for herself in travel journalism. She pretended to be "a poor illiterate photographer who needed things explained in simple words", a useful device for a woman who was a singer. During the war, with

significance of copyright and worked singlehandedly for a decade to bring it on to the scene. She was a key figure in the development of the 1988 Copyright Act. Anne had an analytical brain that grasped the bureaucratic minutiae of endless meetings, and the gift of crystallising them into a couple of sentences, delivered with good humour, which both elevated discussion and defused rancour. Her speeches, delivered without notes, usually had a joke at the end. In the occasional bouts of union infighting it was noticeable that she was never asked to join one faction or another — she enjoyed the respect of all. She was gleeful when, at a particularly turbulent time in London Freelance Branch during which Bernard Levin and his allies were attempting to sack her, she sent a telegram from the Turks and Caicos Islands which along the grapevine was transmitted as a conspiracy message about "young Turks and caucuses". Anne always looked to the future, promoting young photographers and trade unionists whenever possible. She was always accessible for discussion and advice — and a laugh. She leaves her husband Maurice Yates, a staunch ally and partner to whom she was

married for nearly 40 years, and three step-children. **Henry Mason** Val Wilmer writes: Anne Bolt's Home Counties accent and genteel demeanour were useful weapons in the fight for rights and conditions in the journalists' workplace. No where was this more in evidence than in the late 1970s when Bernard Levin attempted to sack the NUJ's London freelance branch with a bunch of acolytes in response to what he interpreted as a "Marxist takeover". He expected, apparently, a natural ally in Anne, who at that stage still occasionally wore a hat to meetings. How wrong he was. The attempt at a right-wing putsch only made her dig her heels in deeper. It was a delight to witness her demolish the incomers with such skill that they hardly realised what was happening. She was one of many middle-of-the-roads radicalised by this interference and one of the first NUJ officers to waive her privilege by publishing her phone number, making herself available to other isolated freelancers. She was a true hack in the sense that journalists use the word: a thorough and principled professional. Anne Bolt, photo-journalist and trade unionist, born November 21, 1912; died December 9, 1996

Weekend Birthdays

FRIENDS of Jane Fonda, 69 today, run to this ritual pattern. Start with the dark star father, the mother of a suicide because of fear of age, the upbringing in Hollywood by governesses and gardeners. Mention the crazy eating and drugging. Do a chart on how she pleased each of three husbands — director Roger Vadim; activist turned politician Tom Hayden; boss of the CNN media ranch Ted Turner — by obliging them with a matching persona: as on-screen sex doll; or wild radical turned fitness franchiser; or devoted Stanford with promoting her health cookbook. Print a panel of quotes to show the contradictions between what she said in each period. "An essentially weak woman of inconsequential opinions," dismisses one profiler, and another draws that she no longer has any value even as an irritant, even the "Feed Jane Fonda to the whales" stickers are peeling off seventies rustbuckets. *What did they expect, you mutter, she's an actress born and bred.* It's the family traits and her living — until she did that ruminant scene when she married Turner. She's simply the ultimate in Method acting — living the life of a time with total conviction, absolute self-induced belief in the latest draft of the script delivered by the zeitgeist. **Today's other birthdays:** Tony Chater, former editor, *Morning Star*, 67; Nobby Clark, photographer, 54; Chris Evert-Lloyd, tennis player, 42; Sir James Hill, conservative MP, 70; Albert Lee, rock guitarist, 67; Geoff Lewis, racehorse trainer, 61; Margaret McGowan, professor of French, University of Sussex, 65; Hanif Mohammad, cricketer, 62; Steve Perryman, footballer, 45; Anthony Powell CE, novelist, 91; Brig VERA Rooks, former director, Army Nursing Services, 72; Walter Spanghero, rugby player, 53; Greenville Starkey, jockey, 57; Keifer Sutherland, actor, 30; Michael Tison Thomas, conductor, 52; Peter Timmiswood, playwright, 80; Cyril Townsend, Conservative MP, 68; Doug Walters, former cricketer, 51; Alan Williams, Labour MP, 51; Carl Wilson, rock guitarist, 60; Bob Worcester, chairman, Mori, 63. **Tomorrow's birthdays:** *Timor's* Marshall Sir John Alden, 75; James Burke, broadcaster, 60; Dr Alan Bush, composer, conductor, pianist, 96; Robin Corbett, Labour MP, 63; Maurice and Robin Gibb of the Bee Gees pop group, both 47; Patricia Hayes, actress, 87; Karin Jonzen, sculptor, 82; Mike Molloy, former editor, the *Daily Mirror*, 58; Sir Trevor Morris, retiring HM chief inspector of constabulary, 62; Chris Oka, former England cricketer, 48; Tracy Ward, actress, 38; The Duke of Westminster, chancellor, Manchester Metropolitan University, 45; Ken Whitmore, playwright, 57; Joe Lee Wilson, blues singer, 61; Sir Peregrine Worsthorne, editor, 73.

Face to Faith

Gloss that obscures the real scandal of Christmas

Richard Chartres
RABBI Botzsch's helpful contribution last week to this Advent series conveys a lively sense of the scandal of the Christmas story. "Is it possible that this child being held so lovingly in the Creator of heaven and earth?" he asks. The story of the Nativity is a door into a faith which in the New Testament is described as foolishness to the cultivated Greeks and a scandal to the religious Jews. It still is. My experience is that dialogue between the great religious traditions. If it is conducted with courtesy, rarely fails to illuminate aspects of one's own faith which are often obscured by familiarity. At the same time, dialogue can serve as a reminder of the large areas of common experience which believers in God share, and the gulf which separates them from the secular orthodoxy which has given birth to the world culture,

dubbed by Ernest Gellner as "Consumer Unbeliever International". In this culture the Christmas story has been domesticated, and like an old master under many layers of varnish, has lost its freshness. The scandal has been obscured as two lines of development reach a critical point. The humanisation of the divine and the divinisation of the human have both combined to eclipse the significance of the advent of the God-man. The humanisation of the divine can be seen in many popular treatments of the Christmas story. The emphasis is not on the Nativity as the embodiment of the divine Word, but as a brilliant edition of universal human experience. The wonder of childhood and the spectacle of self-sacrificing maternal love are employed to evoke a warm emotional response. Christmas in this tradition is presented as a variation on the adage "hope springs eternal" only with some attractive spiritual decor.

The separation between God and human beings to which Rabbi Botzsch and Paul Nahdri referred as an axiom in Judaism and Islam is the gulf which the coming of the God-man bridges. This gulf, however, is hidden in modern times by the divinisation of the human. The centrality of the individual search for material and psychic comfort in fact has displaced the notion of a radical dependence on God. If God is allowed to linger on in the modern scheme, it is as an asset or assistant in the process of individuation. The ethical fall-out from this displacement is that concepts of obligation or duty have been overshadowed by an insistence on human rights and individual authenticity. The secular orthodoxy in which human beings are gods, "the masters and possessors of the earth" (Descartes) developed from Christianity. Many of the Church Fathers use the bold phrase that "God became man so that man may become god" but in course of time the promise has become detached

from the condition that "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." The gulf between God and humanity may be obscure or meaningless for many secularists, but it can resound disconcertingly. Despite the dreams of secular comfort and the potent myth of progress and human perfectibility, we are inescapably brought face to face with our limits. In a world permeated by death in which everything gravitates towards nothingness we either live life blindly, or we know anguish. However, in this anguish, there is a yearning for the eternal and for a communion which will overcome our isolation. This yearning can open our eyes to our own being, and can deepen our desire for unity with the One God. In contemplating our limits and our longing, our minds and hearts can be turned round and our grasp of reality transformed. In the Church's yearly cycle of teaching, Advent is the season for meditating on the limits of our individual lives, and on our human life together on this planet. The Light which came into the world with the birth of Jesus Christ is invisible unless we are aware of the darkness and the limits of human life. St John puts this starkly at the very beginning of his gospel: "He was in the world and the world was made by him and the world knew him not. I am convinced that the spirit-filled

teachers and the Holy Scriptures are not among us to be intelligible to us while we remain as we are. On the contrary, they illuminate our darkness as a first step towards our recognising and embracing our true destiny as persons in communion with God. The great world religions recognise the visitation of the "Word of God." God's communication with us, in various forms. For a number of ancient religions, and also for many of the groups loosely categorised as "New Age," the divine signature is deductible from the cosmos. Spiritual understanding grows with the perception of nature as the manifestation of God. **A** SECOND embodiment of "the Word" can be seen in the religions of the Book. The personal God who engenders history reveals himself in a Law and in a Sacred Scripture. While related to both these traditions, Christianity also believes that "the Word became flesh" in the person of Jesus Christ. The personal incarnation of the Word gives full meaning to the cosmic and scriptural embodiments. The former is freed from the temptation to reduce God to an impersonal divine essence. The latter is freed from the temptation to separate God and humanity, leaving no possibility of communion between them. Jesus reveals to us the

human face of God. In the Nativity story we see God in the foolishness of love, coming as a vulnerable child, so that we may accept him in all freedom. A Jewish-Christian text of the second century wonderfully expresses this humility of the incarnate God. *His love for me brought low his greatness. He made himself like me so that I might receive him. He made himself like me so that I might be clothed in him. I had no fear when I saw him, for he is mercy for me. He took my nature so that I might understand him, for he is mercy for me. He took my nature so that I might understand him. My face so that I should not turn away from him. (Odes of Solomon VII)* An experience of the birth of the Christ in our own lives and the possibility of profound communion with God comes through the Advent contemplation of the limits to human life, and a reliance, not on having but on being. Without Advent, the incarnation is incomprehensible. "He came upon his own but that they were his own received him not" — because they were too busy drowning their sorrows in Yuletide festivity. **Fr Richard Chartres,** the Bishop of London, was commenting on and concluding our Advent series

Letter: Edward Blishen

Brian Simon writes: W L Webb's fine memorial for Edward Blishen (*December*) does not mention Edward's strong and consistent support for comprehensive education. Soon after the publication of his path-breaking *Roaring Boys* (1956), and while still a teacher at Archway county secondary school in London, he joined the original editorial board of the educational journal *Forum*, established by Robin Pedley and myself to promote discussion around the objective of comprehensive schools. Edward contributed frequently to the journal from its first number, remaining a member of the board for 15 years, consistently attending meetings and contributing to our (sometimes) uproarious discussions. Indeed in 1987 he gallantly returned, contributing a full report of an all-day "demonstrative conference" *Forum* organised in critical opposition to the so-called "Great Education Reform Bill", passed into law in 1988. Edward was strongly opposed to the market-based reconstruction of the system embodied in that Act, in this being the same thing as his great friend, Hans Rée, who spoke at the conference. In

Edward we have lost a true humanist, with a deep concern for the liberating power of education as a chief means of self-realisation. Life enhancing, humorous and witty, he was a true companion with a clear, unpretentious view of his ideals, to which he remained faithful all his life. He will be greatly missed throughout the educational, as well as the literary world. **In Memoriam** **DEK** Peter, 6.6.53 to 21.12.96, killed in the bombing of Pan Am 103, over Lockerbie. He lived on the crest of a wave, and for the sake we treasure and envy him. Their spirit lives on. **Births** **THOMAS** Jack, On October 23rd to Ann Thomas and Stephen Jack, a daughter, Isobel Katherine, a sister for Helen and Madeline. **WYATT** MOTT Imogen Sharron, born at home, a daughter to Guy and Richard, a sister for Rosalind and William. Theobald in Lincoln. **Birthdays** **FRYLAND** Michael has graduated Haggai birthday on this special year. Love Mum, Dad, Lisa and Anny. **WFO** Please your neighbours telephone 0711 713 482 or fax 0711 713 4126 between 9am and 3pm Mon-Fri.

Good news for someone else?
Clarke's net legacy to Blair

IF ROBUST economies always won elections then the Conservatives would be half way home by now instead of trailing hopelessly in the polls. The plethora of statistics released this week shows that although there are still very worrying imbalances — like the complete failure on industry's part to invest for the future — the economy as a whole is coasting effortlessly along.

What went wrong for the Government? It is mainly because voters have been deceived too often to take these events at face value. They know that the success of the economy is partly because it was driven too hard into the ground in the first place and only rescued when the pound was ignominiously ejected from the Exchange Rate Mechanism.

During the past few years economic policy has been far more responsible. Norman Lamont raised taxes heavily to undo the excesses of the Lawson boom and Kenneth Clarke hardly put a foot wrong until the nervousness of the election made him take his eye off the ball, allowing interest rates and the exchange rate to rise when greater fiscal tightening would have been more appropriate.

Lima's grim message
And Peru has other problems too

IT IS EASY enough to denounce hostage-taking guerrillas — and equally difficult to suggest a rational end to the crisis. Rigid refusal to satisfy the Tupac Amaru's demands in Lima places the hostages at needless risk: total capitulation will encourage other incidents: there can be no blueprint for a satisfactory compromise however many "experts" are flown in from abroad.

Yet the guerrillas have already achieved their first objective of reminding the world that Peru still faces huge problems and that most Peruvians are still desperately poor. If this sounds a banal statement, that is because everyday hardship has become banal in the age of the global market.

The action of Tupac Amaru was a dramatic gesture in a well chosen location which may prompt caution in future about attending diplomatic parties in leafy suburbs. But it can hardly be seen as part of any coherent revolutionary programme.

Letters to the Editor

Why the Police Bill bugs us

THE right of every citizen to consult privately with his lawyer is not only a fundamental principle of English law and a basic human right, protected also by the European Convention of Human Rights but it has been described by the former Lord Chief Justice, Lord Taylor (in R v Derby Justices Ex parte B [1995] All ER 828) as a "fundamental condition on which the administration of justice as a whole rests" (Dawson of the Age of the Judge, December 19).

We are currently in a constitutional limbo where the criminal justice system has become a key issue in the forthcoming election with both major political parties anxious to outdo the other in their perceived attitude towards serious crime.

Defendants in criminal proceedings have lost their right of silence and, in certain circumstances, their right against self-incrimination. The Criminal Procedure & Investigations Act 1996 effectively reverses the burden of proof. The Opposition has made it plain that it supports these proposals.

IT IS very easy to find examples of powers — and indeed rights — being abused but Meg Henderson seems to think the answer is to do away with them altogether (How I became a dangerous terrorist, December 19). She avoids the fundamental question of whether it is ever acceptable for the police to conduct surveillance. Most people believe that it is justified when pursuing violent and dangerous criminals.

It is absurd to attack Labour for the system proposed by Michael Howard in the Police Bill. These activities were going on in the seventies. This was admitted by 1984 when their use became subject to Home Office guidance but was still not subject to the law.

A legal framework will not necessarily stop Meg Henderson or anyone else from being bugged. And until there is legislation they will have no means of redress. Legislation will tell police officers what is

Enlightenment on what it means to be a Muslim

AS A British "fundamentalist" Muslim, I have begun to fall to be surprised at how right-wing many liberal intellectuals, writing in liberal publications, become when writing about Islam (What on earth is Prince Charles up to? December 19). They lose all sense of balance and intellectual integrity, and their understanding of the subject shows a lack of research.

The ugly picture of Islam that Catherine Bennett paints is not one that I, or the vast majority of Muslims, recognise. She mixes fact, fiction and unfounded opinion.

When it comes to the basic rights and obligations of the citizen, Jack Straw is clearly more interested in political posturing than rational argument and effective action. It is serious about citizens' rights, Jack Straw would do first degree in computing and an MBA. What I find attractive about Islam is the fact that Allah appeals to man to use his intellect.

The "fundamentalists" of Islam teach me that men and women are equal, but different. It teaches me that heaven lies underneath my mother's feet, not my father's. How much more a superior position could a woman be given than to have heaven placed beneath her feet. Islam teaches me that best among men is he who is kindest to his wife.

The genocide of indigenous peoples, racial supremacy, mass slavery, cultural imperialism, two world wars, the Holocaust, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Sabra and Shatila, ethnic cleansing, germ warfare, the rape of the environment, rampant materialism, family breakdown, Third World debt, fortress Europe. All post-Enlightenment, all very rational.

MAYBE you could also tell them why your newspaper gives so much space to a distorted attack on one of the world's three great monotheistic religions? Why are you treating Islam differently from Judaism and Christianity?

Operating under duress

YOUR article about the woman being compelled to have surgery against her will (Mother vs big brother, December 17) took me back to a dilemma which, as senior registrar in psychiatry, and the obstetric team found ourselves in at the Middlesex Hospital just over 30 years ago.

A lady was haemorrhaging internally from an ectopic pregnancy. I was called in to check on her mental state and to decide whether she should be sectioned because she was refusing to have an operation to stop the bleeding which would at the same time necessitate removing the fallopian tube, which had to be done to her that, without the operation, she would bleed to death.

Because she was not psychotic, demented, severely subnormal and had no history of psychiatric problems, I decided she could not be put on a Mental Health Section. She left and collapsed in shock just outside the hospital. She was admitted unconscious to UCH and was operated upon by a team who had not had a refusal from her, because their action was lifesaving.

Over the years I have come to realise that intense denial can lead to just as much harm to a person's well-being as being psychotic.

The Mental Health Act does state that a person can be detained: (1) in the interests of the patient's own health; (2) with a view to the protection of others. The obstetricians and myself were very aware of our duty of care to the patient, more aware than she was of the consequences of her refusal.

ISSUES of consent and capacity/incapacity to consent are fundamental and troublesome. In spite of the sterling efforts of the Law Commission in this decade to raise the level of national debate, judges continue to be placed in an untenable position.

Perhaps a national standing forum on health care law and ethics (along the lines of the President's Commission in the US in the 1980s) would provide a more clearly-defined and more representative lead, allowing for wide-ranging and informed debate at the highest level.

These matters are far too important to be left to judges alone.



Batting for Prince Philip

WHEN a reactionary, aristocratic half-wit is the only major figure to say something sensible about Dumbbells and the gun ban, it's time to worry (Guns? No more dangers than cricket bats, says Philip, December 19). Simply to suggest that guns on their own are not dangerous or evil, and that gun-owners are normal, law-abiding people is to construct a major barrier to rationality, victim-worship and state controls.

Rather than attacking free thinkers, we should be asking why victims of tragedy are assumed to have special insights into why people do things which politicians prefer moral posturing to politics, and why people are seen as passive, vulnerable individuals at danger from

one another. If the choice is between the authoritarianism of victims and moralists, and the robust common sense of Prince Philip, then I'm for royalty every time.

RECALL a character, known as a member of Kabul who featured in the Hitogun comic. He was served by a faithful Afghan subordinate who laid low his enemies with a cricket bat, a weapon which the attendant called his "polly-bat". Paraphrase the Duke into a member of comics in his youth?

Another crop on the famine

THAT Britain was responsible for the genocide in Ireland seems to me not "a Sinn Féin view of history" but common sense (A hunger for justice, December 16). Leaving aside the "economic orthodoxy" argument, why was it that Ulster was among the least affected areas while Connaught suffered the most?

Answer: because British imperial policy had forced many native Irish people from the fertile lands of Ulster to the barren ground of the west (capable of sustaining only the potato) through a systematic policy intended to send them "to Hell or Connaught".

And what of the response of Charles Trevelyan, the civil servant in charge of the relief effort, that the Famine was a providential solution to the problems of Ireland (that is, the problems of British rule in Ireland), intended to "starve the population"? Joe Guinan, Preston Old Road, Lancs BB2.

THE SIMPLE point is that, in the 1940s, no government anywhere in the world had a clear idea of how to deal with a major famine. It was only during the Indian famines of the following decades, caused by monsoon failures, that a clear and effective set of policies for dealing with famine relief was thrashed out.

THE IRISH are never told that at the same time as the Famine, working-class people in England and Scotland were dying of overwork, cholera, typhoid, tuberculosis and malnutrition in very large numbers. It was a brutal age for all except the ruling class. Unfortunately, the ruling class writes history. Edwin A. Rothwell, Trent Avenue, Millrow, Rochdale OL16.

Some spleen on the screen

FRED Aicken's differentiation between films of "quality" and those which are a commercial success, is a masterpiece of cultural elitism (Letters, December 17). Similarly, your chief cinema critic's 10 favourite films of 1996 included only two which were the Top 10 in terms of box-office receipts (Sense and Sensibility at seventh, and The Englishman's Boy at 10th).

This is symptomatic of the gulf between critics and punters. More broadly, the notion that popular appeal implies inferior quality — whose "quality" — arises from a spurious division of the arts into low, middle and high-brow. It also enables those self-appointed cultural guardians at the summit of this hierarchy to look down with disdain at the great unwashed.

Marjory Beadford, 37 Grays Estate, Huxley, W Yorks LS29 8NW.

A Country Diary

NORTH PEMBROKESHIRE: The temperature was above freezing, but the dark damp had entered our bones. Four of us, all voluntary wardens, assembled on the reserve to clear bramble and bracken from a group of bog myrtle plants, whose pungent scent reminds so many people of walking in Scotland. Some coats and hats were removed, our dead bones alive again.

In summer, this walk is more difficult because of the bracken. The unobscured sound of feeding fieldfares led us to a holly tree. The berries, more orange than red, were clustered on the branches like corn on the cob. Some had semi-rotted leaves pushing through the fruity exuberance. In the garden, we have watched the three holly trees being carefully pruned clean

by blackbirds and fieldfares. The need for food and shelter makes, but the dark damp had entered our bones. Digging in the garden, I was suddenly in the middle of a bird battle. Two male peregrine falcons were fighting ferociously above my head. Their speed made it difficult to know what the bone of contention was. It could have been a starling. Every morning, groups of starlings come down from their Preseli roosts to probe and fossick around farms holding cattle, or to strut and spear beside the sheep. Once fed, they loathe on trees or wires, gossiping. They take off as soon as the light moves down. Different groups from a wide area gather until, by the time they have reached the pass at Welsh-gwyn, they are in their thousands. They fly up the hill, skimming the ground. If you stand in their way they undulate over you. The noise of their wings fills your ears. So the peregrines have access to good food for Christmas — may we all! AUDREY INSCH

Discharge from Sellafield

YOU report (Sellafield storm over plan to increase discharges, December 17) that BNFL plans a "huge increase" in discharges from its Thorp plant. In fact, the company is seeking an increase in the aerial discharge limit for tritium, which will result in an increase of just 0.05 per cent in the current aerial discharge limit from Thorp. However, the consequences of increasing the aerial discharge is that less tritium remains in the discharges to the sea and the company has therefore sought a reduction in the liquid discharge limit to accommodate that. The total overall discharges from Thorp will be unchanged.

The additional environmental impact to even the people living close to Sellafield will be three microsieverts a year — which is equivalent to spending three hours in Cornwall where average natural background radioactivity is three times higher than normal. BNFL, British Nuclear Fuels plc, Risley, Warrington, Chas WA3 6AS.

A tactful suggestion for the royal gaffer



AT the risk of giving offence, it seems clear to me that the theme of the week has been fact. The Duke of Edinburgh — a septagenarian whose two main hobbies have been shooting and shooting his mouth off — appalled the families of the Dunblane murder victims and their sympathisers by tactlessly declaring that, if you are going to ban handguns, you might as well lock up cricket bats, another potentially lethal sporting implement. I am a Muslim who teaches at a Birmingham school, rudely interrupted a rehearsal of the annual carol concert to denounce Muslim students for singing Christmas hymns. And the BBC has cancelled tonight's screening of the drama Gobbie — a comedy

perhaps that breezy sub-clause ("which he could do very easily") which takes the comment beyond social brick-dropping to suicidal gaudiness. The serious public gaffe nearly always involves a metaphor. The late Nicholas Ridley was pilloried for describing an accident-prone colleague as "sailing with his bow doors open" shortly after the Herald of Free Enterprise ferry had sunk in such circumstances. Metaphor depends on comparison and, as we know from everyday conversation, comparison (You remind me of ...) is frequently risky. The Duke of Edinburgh — like the late Nicholas Ridley — foolishly equated the terrible with the innocuous.

The anger which has been triggered by Israr Khan's intervention at the Washwood Heath Secondary School's carol concert rehearsal is also about tact, but in the sense of social protocol. Many will feel that there were channels available to Mr Khan — such as individual discussion with the teachers or pupils involved — which would have been preferable to his histrionic tactics. But this incident also touches on the convention of tolerance for the religious views of

others. The reason that Mr Khan's boorishness touches such a nerve is the widespread perception that modern British culture has become hyper-progressive of Islam since the Rushdie affair. For what is political correctness but organised and institutionalised tact? A friend of mine, recently discussing a mooted series about the state of the world's main religions with a prominent, progressive, writer, asked him would not be permitted the same freedom of comment in the section on Islam. "Well, of course, you wouldn't," replied the producer hotly.

But it is not only in the matter of religion that, in these morally jumpy times, broad evidence scan the schedules for evidence of tactlessness. The cancellation of Nick Newman and Ian Hislop's play Gobbie — in case it offends the relatives of Scotland's E.coli victims — is a perfect example of how confused and hypocritical the pursuit of tactful broad-casting can become.

behaviour of press, government, food industry and public during a national health scare. Now it seems highly unlikely that relatives of any of the people who have died recently from CJD would have been able to watch this play. They might even have considered the very concept of a killer food comedy inappropriate. The BBC, however, seemed to have taken the sensible view that public policy cannot entirely be dictated by isolated private sentiment. Yet, suddenly, after the death of a people from a different, untreatable and untransmittable and the BBC succumbed to another of its bouts of foot-in-mouth disease.

When I tactlessly raised this matter at a BBC Christmas party this week, the explanation from senior management was that "soundings" in Scotland had revealed that humour about food poisoning would indeed go down ill north of the border. But why should E.coli relatives be given greater protection than the CJD families would have been? Why could the BBC's "regional opt-outs" from individual shows not have been invoked? And if

for example, you had lost relatives in the Pan Am 103 or TWA 800 disasters, I doubt that you could ever watch Airplane again — but should that movie be banned in perpetuity from the BBC? Finally, it is possible to feel a shred of sympathy for the own imposition has seen the simultaneous apothecosis of another of Britain's ambassadors. Arne Attkins — bigoted, bored, arrogant, and a bit of a snob — is one of the six names on the shortlist for the Today Personality of the Year poll, which the Labour Party made such an impolitic attempt to rig. Mrs Attkins owes her rise and the ludicrous position of equal moral stature with such other Today nominees as the Wolverhampton teacher Lisa Potts, who risked her life defending her pupils against machete attack — to some operatically tactless remarks about homosexuals in the Church of England. Peruvian metaphor and simply use noun and verb gaucherie.

The obvious conclusion, though, is that, in the game of how you choose your targets; rather like ... but in this context, such a metaphor would be tactless.

Bangladesh's story written in blood

Commentary
Martin Woollacott

THE ROAD from the Indian border to Faridpur in Bangladesh is a long necklace of battered farms, on which villages are closely strung like beads. Every half mile or so, among the green of paddy field and coconut grove, there is a scatter of huts, with beaten earth paths to each doorway, or the clutter of bazaar shops with tea, grain, and soap laid out on open boards, that mark a larger settlement.

of every age, the more senior calling out suggestions as to wording while the more junior fixed on the visitors an unwavering Bengal stare. When the document was finished, and after a suitably large envelope for it had, with some difficulty, been located, it was ceremoniously handed to me. As I put it in my bag, there was an audible gasp of satisfaction from the villagers. There was nothing in the letter that the world did not, in a general way, already know, yet, as it was passed to me, the weight of this village's simple expectation that justice would be done was passed on as well.

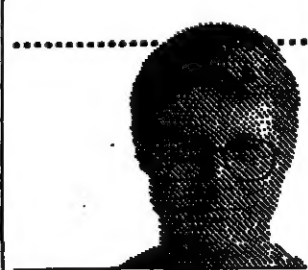
Sheikh Mujib's daughter, However, Bangladesh also offers a lesson on the intractable nature of violence — on its terrible attractions and frequent uselessness, and on the difficulty of eradicating it once certain sequences have been set in motion.

on Pakistani auxiliaries. The car, bumping down narrow unlit lanes, brought us eventually to a muddled piece of open ground between shuttered stalls. It was absolutely empty except for the dead body of a young man who had been recently shot in the chest. He was good looking and well made, dressed in a khaki military shirt and trousers, a middle class boy of perhaps 22. Bodies seen at a distance or contorted and thrown about are one thing, but this was a strange moment of intimacy of a very dif-

For a second I saw him as his parents would have seen him, a loved one lost, his male beauty wasted in the dirt

ferent kind. We stood over him like mourners. For a second or two I saw him as his mother, father, or sister would have seen him, as a loved one lost and gone, his male beauty wasted in the dirt. I had not fully understood, till then, the price that Bangladesh was paying.

Death of an era



Martin Kettle

RAPHAEL Samuel's funeral in Highgate Cemetery this week seemed more than just the funeral of a very remarkable man who has died far too early, at the age of 51. It seemed almost like the funeral of a way of thinking and a wake for an era of the human spirit. To those of us who do not believe in resurrection, it had a kind of wider finality.

see who else was there, and lining the muddy and gravelled avenue that winds its way across the damp and wooded hillside graveyard. Familiar figures from what was once the New Left bent nervously to lift his coffin from the hearse and then carry it, with its huge bunch of blood-red roses, on his last march.

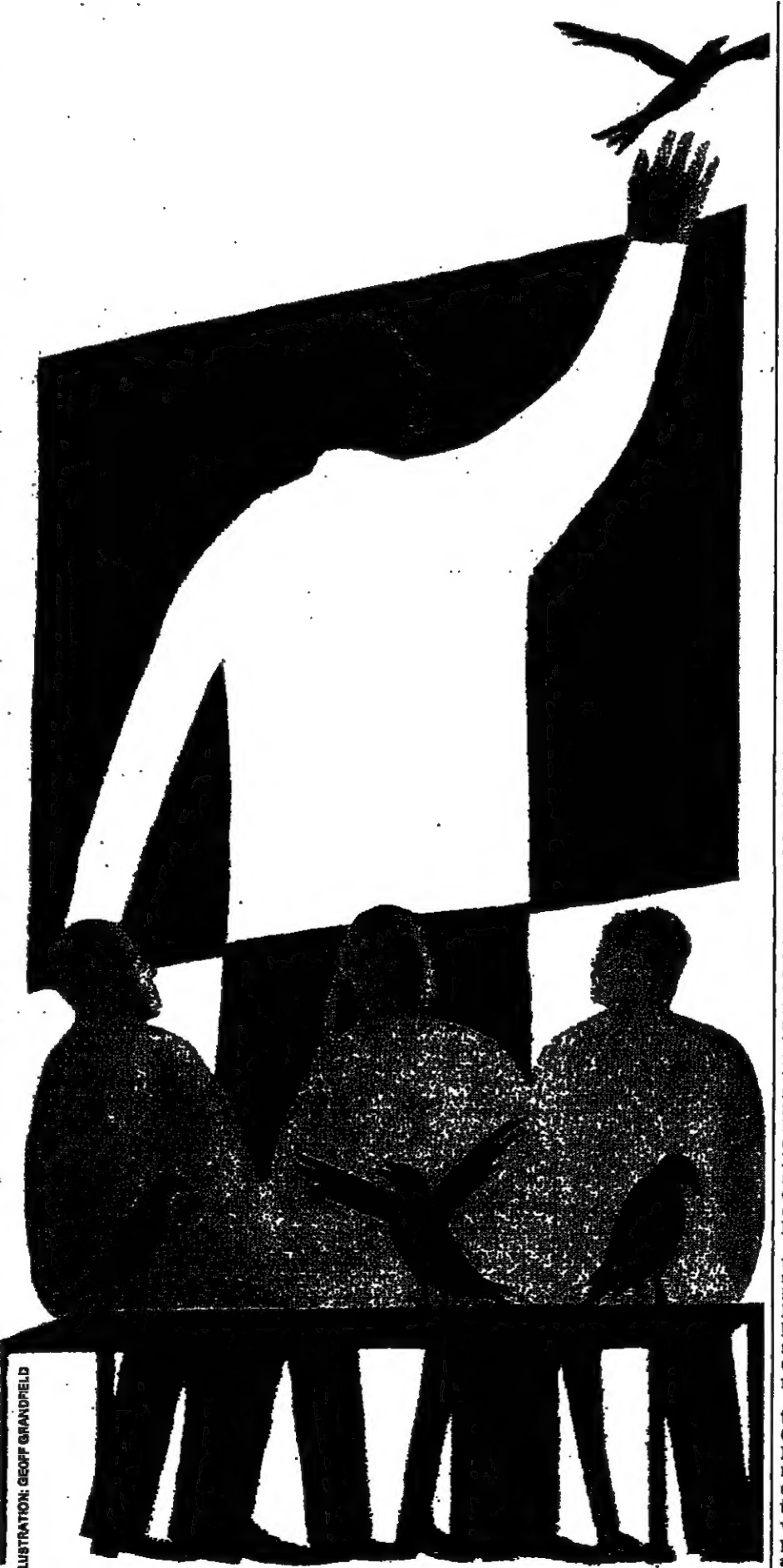
Figures from what was once the New Left bent nervously to lift his coffin

And yet that's just it. We cannot honestly sing such songs now. We remember the words and they move us greatly, but I don't think many people believe in them any more. A new Jerusalem? Pardon me while I turn my New Labour eyes even of the wall, England Arise? The long march towards a society of all for all, though he was hugely interested in both. He loved people's memories and inheritances, yours, mine, his own, everyone's. Through his work in the Ruskin History Workshop, he was, in spite of his apparent aversion to his own celebrity, the presiding genius of the modern reclamation of the day before yesterday. That book of your district in old photographs is his legacy, just as much as the more learned books of his own that he never quite seemed to finish.

School's out, forever

Do your children exist solely to shop, or sit slavishly in front of a computer? Neil Postman argues that schooling needs a whole new rationale if it is to survive

IN CONSIDERING how to conduct the schooling of our young adults we have two problems to solve: one of them is an engineering problem; the other a metaphysical one. The engineering problem is essentially a technical one. It is the problem of the means by which the young will become learned. It addresses the issues of where and when things will be done, and how learning is supposed to occur. The problem is not a simple one. It requires some knowledge of applied psychology, group dynamics, the structure of subjects, and practical experience. Any self-respecting teacher will have some ideas about how to solve this problem.



that would give point to education. And here I should like to suggest two possibilities. The first, I call the story of the Spaceship Earth. This is the story of human beings as stewards of the Earth, caretakers of a vulnerable space capsule. It is a relatively new narrative, not fully developed, but it is a story that evokes in young people a sense of responsibility and commitment. And it is a story that has the power to bind people. It makes the idea of racism both irrelevant and ridiculous, and it makes clear the interdependence of human beings and their need for solidarity. If any part of the spaceship is poisoned, then all suffer;

The story, as it is told in various places and forms, is essentially as follows: if perfection is to be found anywhere in the universe, it is assumed to exist in God. There may have been a time when human beings were perfect, but at some point, for various reasons, their powers were diminished, so that they were forced to live forever in a state of imperfect understanding. Indeed, for us to believe that we are godlike, or perfect, is among the most serious sins of which we are capable. The Greeks called the sin "hubris". The Christians call it "pride". Scientists call it "dogmatism".

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Nonetheless, it is important to keep in mind that the engineering of learning can be assigned an importance it doesn't always deserve. What is also needed is a reason for schooling. And this is the metaphysical problem I refer to. A reason, as I use the word here, is different from a motivation. Within the context of schooling, motivation refers to a temporary psychic event in which curiosity is aroused and attention is focused. It does not mean to disparage it. But it must not be confused with a reason for being in a classroom, for listening to a teacher, for taking an examination, for doing homework, for putting up with school even if you are not motivated.

which is to say that the extinction of the rain forest is not a Brazilian problem, the pollution of the oceans is not a Miami problem, the depletion of the ozone layer is not an Australian problem. It follows from this that genocide is not a Bosnian problem, hunger not a Somali problem, political oppression not a Chinese problem. "Never send to know for whom the bell tolls," John Donne wrote. "It tolls for thee." If ever there was a narrative to animate that idea, the Earth as our one and only spaceship is it.

that depicts waste and indifference as evil, that requires a vision of the future and a commitment to the present. A second possible narrative is one I call the story of the Fallen Angel. I use a religious metaphor here to emphasize the point that what I shall describe is not merely a method or an epistemology, but a narrative, and one of almost universal acceptance.

Disappearance of Childhood, and Teaching as a Subversive Activity. Postman is Professor of Communication Arts and Sciences at New York University. His newest book is The End of Education: Rethinking the Value of School

This week's essayist, Neil Postman, is one of America's sharpest, most engaging cultural critics. Best known in Britain for *Amusing Ourselves to Death* (Methuen), a powerful critique of television's impact, his books include *The*



Canny operator... Geoff Mulcahy, who has been accused of being "cautious to the point of corporate inactivity" likes to deliberate over his decisions. PHOTOGRAPH: Gary Wessner

A workhorse glad to be grey

Reputations

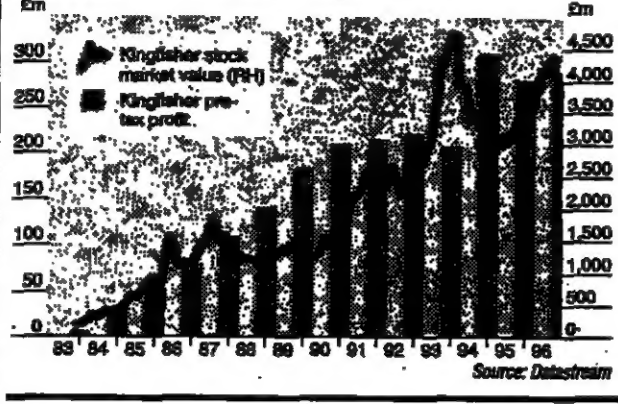
ROGER COWE on the man who played Santa at Woolworth's

GEOFF MULCAHY is the nearest the business world gets to Father Christmas. As chief executive of the Kingfisher group he is in charge of Woolworth, which takes a tenth of its £1.4 billion annual turnover in Christmas week, selling 10.5 per cent of Britain's toys, 14.5 per cent of this Christmas's CDs, tapes and videos, and a fair chunk of festive chocolates. Yet Mulcahy is about as far as you can get from a jolly

Santa. Tall and slim with surprising ginger-blond hair, the thought of him ever uttering the immortal "Ho, Ho, Ho" is quite absurd. A subdued "No, No, No" would be more like it, as he turns down some business project after weeks of careful deliberation. He is not one of those retailers who worked their way up from the shop floor and can't enter a store without adjusting the displays. Indeed, one of that 1980s breed told him: "You'll never be a real retailer, you've got an MBA."

Mulcahy is a businessman, with all the greyness that conveys. "One of the 10 most tedious men in the world," snapped one critic. He has a wry sense of humour, but the jokes are usually kept to himself. He used to tell managers that business should be fun and that the maxim about it being better to take part was completely wrong. "I believe in winning," he says. His passion is for profit margins, stock turnover, the supply chain — and for work. He works a day and a half every day, as one former colleague put it, and drops into the stores at weekends. "If you go out and trot around you can spot things faster than you can with com-

Kingfisher takes flight



puter systems," he says. "And the staff need to feel important. If they don't, the business won't run properly." In the 1980s, when Ralph Halpern, Terence Couran and George Davies bestrode the high street, greyness seemed a disadvantage. But Kingfisher's management controlled expansion in the good times and when recession came was still plodding along while Burton, Storehouse and Next courted bankruptcy. Then Woolworth went haywire at Christmas 1994, DIY market leader B&Q suffered

Mulcahy's way with figures

THE struggling Woolworth chain was bought in 1982 by a financial consortium. Fateroster, which injected a new team including Geoff Mulcahy as finance director. Mulcahy moved up to chief executive in 1984. He oversaw the rapid expansion of B&Q and acquired Comet. In 1986 he faced a takeover bid from Dixons which was narrowly defeated. The Superdrug chain was acquired and the

group's name was changed to Kingfisher in 1988. Woolworth store ranges were cut and the culling continued, releasing cash for investment in B&Q. In 1989 Mulcahy's attempt to buy Dixons failed. He bought French electrical retailer Darty in 1993. Recession hit B&Q and Comet, and attempts to update Woolworth's systems led to chaos. Mulcahy has spent the last couple of years repairing the damage.

Shareholders are bleeding companies dry

IAM struck by the weaknesses rather than the strengths of British industry. The balance of payments is pretty dire and I worry that it is not only negative in manufacturing but in services as well. The Government white paper on competitiveness was right. The challenge is to raise the level of under-achievers to the level of the best in the world. But the Government has no plans to do that. British companies underperform on training so why are there no inducements to improve? I would go for a modern levy/grant system to fund more training.

There are some good performers but in too many areas we're dependent on imports, and UK-based companies lack large market share. This should be a top priority for any government. One of the challenges going into the millennium is to tackle the shareholders who bleed too much money from companies. That means lowering the rate of return and encouraging investment in people and in new equipment. We also have to get away from old adversarial attitudes. Employers and company directors could start by realising that huge pay increases are perceived as demoralising and cynical by employees.

Flexibility has become a strength

ONE of the main strengths of British industry that has become apparent in the past few years is the more flexible use of labour — and that is particularly good news in an upturn. Companies are much more aware of training and development needs for the work force and seem to be spending more money on training, so they are getting better value out of staff. But our members have clear concerns about the education system and the quality of people companies have to work with.

Evaluation in 1992 was against a background of recession but exports went up and imports didn't grow as quickly, so now we are optimistic where we were depressed. Dealing with devaluation may not be a weakness, but how industry will respond to the appreciation of sterling could be. Although the productivity gap between Britain and other countries has narrowed, one short-term weakness of manufacturing through this recovery is weak investment. It is a worry that if investment is not high enough we will not get the pick-up in supply, and that could lead to capacity constraints.

Euro Eye

ONE of the questions France's president Jacques Chirac will have to chew on over Christmas is who to appoint to the Banque de France's monetary council. Two of the nine-strong council responsible for setting French interest rates have to be reappointed or replaced by the beginning of January.

The process is being watched with particular interest by the financial markets and is apparently proving complicated because the three men who have the job of nominating would-be members are divided. Under the present struc-

Mark Milner

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Chirac seeking flexible friends

JEREMY BENTHAM (1748-1820) was a philosopher, lawyer, economist and statesman. He is best known for his theory of utilitarianism, which holds that the best action is that which maximizes the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people.

German commentators are already critical for a couple of the French pressure to build more "flexibility" into the stability which is meant to ensure post-monetary union budgetary rectitude and would be quick to pounce on any further evidence of French backsliding.

Mr Chirac is unlikely to find the alternatives politically appealing. One would be to tackle the problem head on. According to a number of economists, however, that would require a thorough reform of the labour market.

Another, perhaps the most likely, would be to try to soldier on and hope the economy picks up sufficiently to dent the jobless total — though French patience may prove limited.

Perhaps the best Mr Chirac can hope for is a Christmas present from the Americans in the form of a stronger dollar. That would help both the Germans and the French on the currency and interest rate fronts.

In the meantime Mr Chirac might prefer to have a few flexible friends in the right place.

200 S...
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سكرا من الامل

Imro levies record compensation sum over fund-management scandal - with hefty fine still to come

Morgan must pay £200m

UP TO 90,000 investors in unit trusts operated by former Morgan Grenfell fund manager Peter Young stand to receive about £200 million in the biggest compensation programme ever ordered by City regulators.

The running of three investment trusts which led to the sacking of Mr Young. The 38-year-old Oxford graduate is under investigation by the Serious Fraud Office over his alleged role in establishing a secret web of companies in which funds placed with Morgan Grenfell trusts were invested. Five other senior managers have been sacked over the affair.

The eventual bill for Morgan Grenfell seems certain to rise further as the Deutsche Bank subsidiary faces the prospect of a huge fine from Imro for infringing its rules. Analysts speculated yesterday that the cost to Deutsche for rehabilitating the reputation of one of Britain's leading

fund managers could reach £500 million. This is because the £200 million compensation package comes on top of the £180 million spent by Deutsche Bank to bail out Morgan Grenfell by buying back inflated securities held in funds operated by Mr Young.

Any investor with money held in European funds operated by the "rogue" manager between August 1, 1995 and September 5 this year will qualify for compensation. The aim is to give investors the difference between the money they earned from the troubled Morgan Grenfell trusts and the average return from comparable funds.

Morgan Grenfell said yesterday that the compensation package underlined its commitment to ensure that no investors would suffer losses. Imro said letters would be sent to all investors detailing their entitlement to compensation. Imro director Daniel Waters said: "We are pleased that these discussions have been brought to a speedy conclusion. It is in the interests of investors that compensation will be paid without undue delay. Imro believes that this agreement is a fair and equitable one which safeguards the interests of investors."

Notebook

Busy regulators earn their keep



Edited by Mark Milner

THESE are busy times for Britain's utilities regulators. Yesterday OfTel (telecommunications) argued its powers in the High Court. Ofwat (water) criticised eight water-only companies for non-compliance with its guidelines, and Railtrack's regulator, John Swift, castigated the company because of its failure to keep up with its infrastructure spending timetable.

which they are based are "in" or "out". The clock is ticking. The Bank of England, for example, warned British banks in May that they needed to make sure that their wholesale operations, if not the retail side of the business (the one that deals with you and me), was prepared for EMU. Even in France and Germany, however, some banks are only now commissioning "impact studies" which can take several months to carry out, to decide what actions they need to take.

BT loses watchdog challenge

Nicholas Bannister on the High Court's landmark ruling for utilities regulation

BRITISH Telecom's attempt to curb the powers of industry regulator Don Cruickshank was thrown out yesterday by the High Court in a landmark decision for utilities regulation. The telecom group had claimed that Mr Cruickshank exceeded his authority when he successfully sought the inclusion in BT's licence of a catch-all clause outlawing anti-competitive behaviour. But Lord Justice Phillips and Mr Justice Hooper dismissed BT's application for a judicial review, poured scorn on some of the arguments advanced by BT, and ordered the group to pay OfTel's cost.

BT said it had spent "well under £1 million" challenging the legality of Mr Cruickshank's action. It had earlier said it was taking legal action because it was in the interest of public and shareholders that the extent of the regulator's powers should be determined. Mr Cruickshank said yesterday's ruling ended a period of uncertainty for the telecommunications industry. He would be including the fair trading conditions in the licence of other operators. OfTel had made its decision to remove a large proportion of BT's business activities from price controls conditional upon the group's acceptance of the new fair trading clause.



On the waterfront... the sacked Liverpool dockers picketing the port gates

PHOTOGRAPH: DON MERRIS

Sacked dockers reject offer

MARTIN Heisell Northern Industrial Correspondent

THE MERSEY dockers sacked 15 months ago yesterday threatened the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company with an international boycott after overwhelmingly rejecting their former employer's final peace offer.

against accepting a pay and jobs package offering £28,000 to 325 former MDHC employees, sacked after refusing to cross another company's picket line. They were also offered the chance to apply for up to 40 jobs in the port.

After the meeting in Liverpool, dockers' leaders said the men remained determined that all 500 people sacked - including those dismissed by other port employers - should be given the

chance of work. The rejection will mean unremitting picketing at dock gates. Dockers' leaders will call for an international boycott of the port of Liverpool on January 20. Jimmy Nolan, chairman of the port shop stewards, said: "That means there will be a deterioration in the financial position of the MDHC, which is the only thing that will persuade them to negotiate our reinstatement."

1,200 Scots get job shock for Christmas

Calla Weston Industrial Correspondent

MISERABLE Christmas is in store for more than 1,200 workers in Scotland who were yesterday made redundant or told their jobs were under threat. Up to 500 manual and staff jobs could be shed at the Norwegian-owned Kvaerner Govan shipyard in Glasgow unless new orders can be confirmed, the management warned.

Sleight Ellingsen, managing director, said: "I very much regret having to make this announcement on the eve of the Christmas and New Year holidays. We have delayed as long as we possibly could, because we had hoped to clinch a major order." The strength of the pound was not helping the yard's international competitiveness, he said.

Economy in best shape for a generation, says Clarke

Charlotte Deeny

CHANCELLOR Kenneth Clarke boasted yesterday that the economy will enter the new year in the best shape for a generation as official figures showed the biggest jump in living standards since the height of the Nigel Lawson boom in 1988.

Real disposable income grew by 0.9 per cent in the three months to September compared with the preceding three months, taking the annual rate to 4.5 per cent, according to figures from the Office for National Statistics. Fueled by rising incomes, consumer expenditure continues to be the driving force behind the economy's progress, up 3.2 per cent on this time last year.

Newbury bypass cement deal cracks Tarmac's green facade

Sam King

TARMAC, the self-styled "green" construction group, is supplying concrete to the controversial Newbury bypass, despite insisting earlier this year that it would not be involved with the project in the absence of strict environmental standards.

Documents obtained by Friends of the Earth and seen by the Guardian indicate that Tarmac is supplying its Topmix product to the scheme. The news comes seven months after Sir John Barnham, Tarmac's chairman, promised that if the group was awarded the £100 million Newbury contract it would insist it was built in the most environmentally friendly way possible.

News in brief

Risk of gas supply cuts The gas industry regulator warned last night that there was a greater risk of customer interruption on the gas network - including power stations and hospitals - being cut off this winter, adding to fears that cold weather and increased demand could hit energy supplies.

Fate of power firm in balance

THE fate of Northern Electric hung in the balance last night as the Takeover Panel allowed American predator CE Electric to delay until midnight the outcome of its £782 million hostile bid.

TOURIST RATES - BANK SELLS

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Austria 17.75	Germany 6.23	Japan 1.268	South Africa 7.58
Belgium 11.92	Greece 403.60	Netherlands 2.83	Spain 212.25
Canada 2.22	Hong Kong 12.57	New Zealand 2.286	Sweden 11.25
Cyprus 0.761	India 59.60	Norway 10.82	Switzerland 2.18
Denmark 9.68	Ireland 0.977	Portugal 255.40	Turkey 171.248
Finland 7.67	Israel 5.45	Saudi Arabia 6.20	USA 1.0595

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Finance Guardian

Manufacturing a revolution

Is British industry back? Guardian writers and photographer **Don McPhee** have been finding out. **Simon Beavis** opens a series of reports and representative voices assess **The Real Picture**



Industrial hot spot... flasks containing used nuclear fuel cool down for five years before uranium and plutonium is reprocessed at Sellafield

PHOTOGRAPH: DON MCPHEE

IT HAS been Conservative Party orthodoxy that in the past 17 years Britain has begun to arrest 100 years of economic decline. Read any one of the three white papers on competitiveness produced by Michael Heseltine and that is the clear subtext. Prepare to hear a lot more of it ahead of the election.

But for all the radical changes brought in by the Government during the 1980s — from privatisation to trade union reform to opening the flood gates for inward investment — the claim is disingenuous, as most manufacturers will testify. It is only relatively recently — since the fall of Margaret Thatcher — that Tory politicians realised they could no longer pretend manufacturing didn't matter.

Yet that was the overarching belief which formed industrial policy in the Thatcher years. The future lay in the service sector. Industry was an increasing irrelevance.

This attitude — which was lapped up with arrogant certainty in the City and translated into a damaging short-termism — left British industry as bereft and battered as would any regime of powerful trade union rights or nationalisation.

It has left Britain, with a

new century approaching, caught in fundamental debates which in a more rational economy would be seen as an indulgence. Like how to stimulate essential investment in industry — the CBI promises for next year one of the most significant investigations into Britain's poor investment record.

Or like the telling complacency underlying the presumption that because the trade deficit in manufacturing goods is now forecast to be only \$8 billion in 1997 — just under half of its 1989 peak — everything is somehow all right.

The context has begun to change, however. The election campaign will see both main political parties vying vigorously for the business vote. Every time the Conservatives draw on an OECD survey showing Britain topping the growth league of the G7 countries, Labour will point to other evidence showing that Britain has slumped from 18th to 18th in the world prosperity ratings, behind Hong Kong and Singapore.

But one important fact remains: John Major could not have made the slightest claim to speak for this constituency unless attitudes within his party had shifted.

Next week, the Guardian begins a series on the new turn to page 10, column 7

We need to apply our technology

OUR international companies are highly competitive. But there's a long tail of smaller companies who are less good and that's a weakness. One strength is our good fundamental research, but we are less good at applied technology. We need to get big and smaller companies together to push technology through the system: small companies can often apply technology more quickly, particularly information technology and particularly in the service sector, because fundamental research needs to be better applied in the market.

Another strength is that the UK is beginning to show it understands labour markets and how to use them more effectively.

We have some very forward-looking unions, too, who understand they are operating in a totally changed world and with good companies who understand the value of partnership that bodes well for the future.

More professional management, with people who've been trained for their job, combined with greater employee involvement, more responsibility devolved and better communications are all significant changes which have occurred in recent years.

The challenge for the millennium is that businesses will be market driven. Companies will have to know how to respond quickly and appropriately to customers worldwide who will buy their products and services.

And businesses will have to know how to build and manage their reputation as effectively as they build market share: how to create a feeling that a company is good at responding to customers but is also a company which can be trusted.

Sir David Simon, chairman of BP

Long grey tail of low standards

IT TAKES three years to turn around an economic deficit, seven for a technology deficit, and 20 for a skills and attitude deficit. Twenty years ago our country was suffering from an attitude deficit with high taxes, poor industrial relations and poor focus on customer service. It was very difficult to do business here.

Today loss-making industries are no longer a burden on the taxpayer. We have an improving infrastructure for competitiveness including lower telecoms, steel and energy prices.

At their best, UK companies are as good as any in the world. But there is a long grey tail of poorly performing small- and medium-sized companies. Turning these around will be a tough challenge.

In our business, the motor industry, the Japanese take the need to improve the performance of suppliers very seriously. Western companies have a more variable attitude. Doing better takes time. The City still pushes companies to look to the short term, though there is an increasing number of fund managers who take a long-term view.

Improvements also need everyone to be involved. If an employee finds a faulty part,

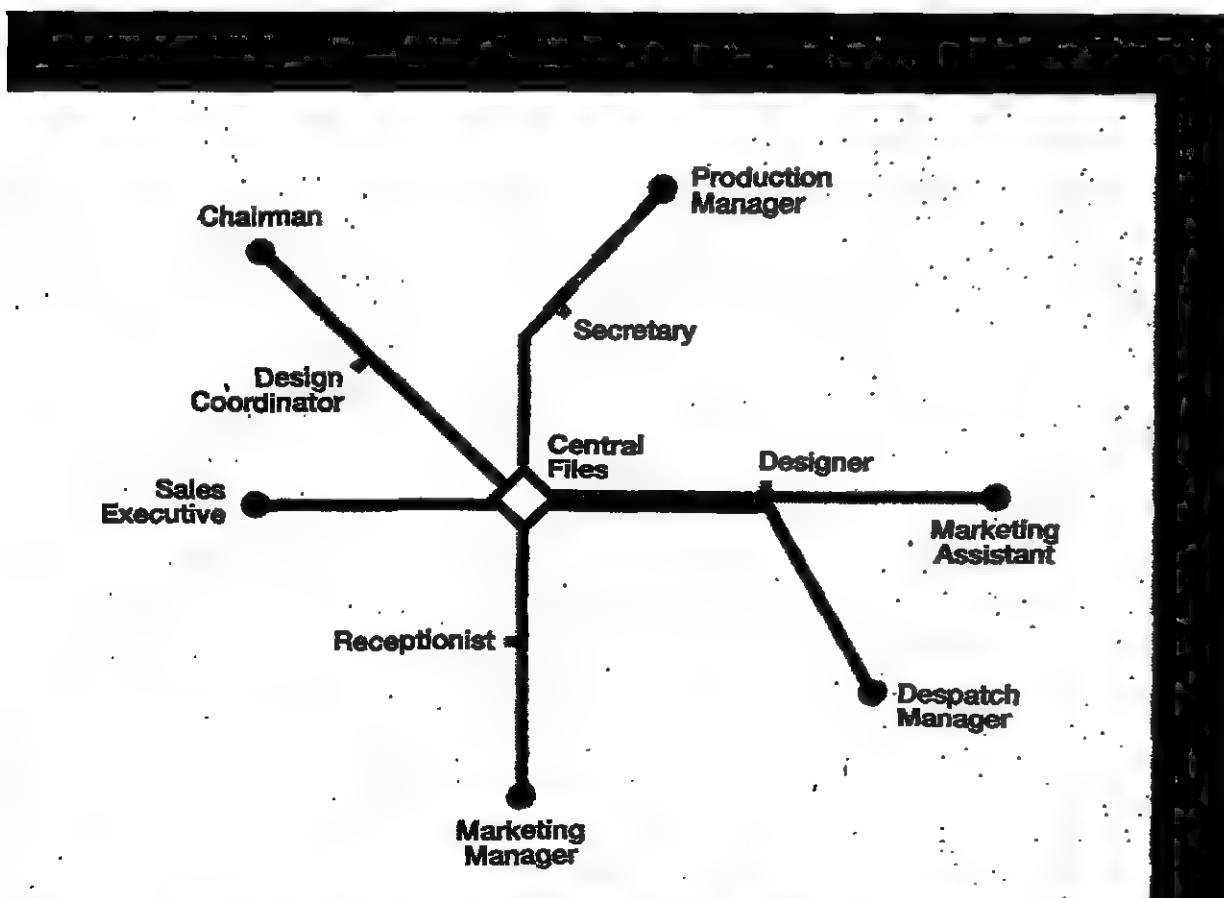
he can throw it away and still make his target production number for the day. If he looks for the root cause, it may involve several people and take several man-days. There is a short-term cost, but in the long run all these incremental gains in quality and productivity give a company an unassailable position. It is a question of philosophy.

Compared with Germany, France and Italy, we are in much better shape. The Europeans used to laugh at us. Now they are privatising industry, cutting taxes and trying to introduce flexibility.

There are two big challenges facing the British government. The quality of secondary education is a very serious threat to industry's ability to remain competitive in global markets.

The health service is the other major challenge. It must become more efficient, and learn how to do 50 per cent more for 50 per cent less cost. The key is to focus on the non-value-adding parts of the NHS — and that doesn't mean closing wards or losing staff.

John Nell, group chief executive, The Unipart Group



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Thriving small firms hold key

FEEL more optimistic than I have for many years. The fundamental problems still remain. Inadequate investment in training, woefully inadequate investment in state of the art machinery and in the development of new products and processes — and on top of this we still lack a supportive capital structure.

However, I meet increasing numbers of small and medium-sized companies which have had the aspiration, drive and tenacity to establish worldwide positions and leadership in niche markets. It is on these hidden champions that the country's economic future lies.

It has been our failure to grow small business into large that is the root cause of our decline, coupled with a hangover of a very strong anti-manufacturing culture. There is still too little provision of start-up finance and almost no long-term finance.

Small companies rely on overdrafts and there is little risk capital on offer. Sadly there is no sign of change and four out of five small businesses which start up fail within five years.

Nevertheless, I can now produce examples of manufacturing companies in every region which have proven their ability to take on the toughest world competition and win.

Two other trends give me cheer. Firstly the impact of Far Eastern inward investment on the supply chain has forced more suppliers to adopt standards and consistency of quality which are prerequisites to any company being world class.

Secondly in our largest companies we are developing a number of significant world class champions.

I believe the decline in our manufacturing industries has been arrested. I know we could reverse the trend and instead of producing the same at lower and lower cost, share in the growth of world de-

mand for the new and improved. The question remains, however, do we have enough entrepreneurs, managers and work forces with the aspiration and determination to lead the world?

Sir John Harvey-Jones, former ICI chairman

Quick Crossword No. 8315

V A F T
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P U O L I T I C A N
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O D I O U S R U N W A Y
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Solution No. 8314

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- Across**
- 1 Perimeter (13)
 - 8 Airie (7)
 - 9 Scrimp (6)
 - 10 Heap (4)
 - 11 Clergyman's address (9)
 - 13 In foreign parts (9)
 - 14 Attitude — taken by golfers? (8)
 - 17 It's not a positive — derisive (8)
 - 19 Let it stand (4)
 - 21 Perfect (8)

- Down**
- 1 Lettuce — Greek isle (3)
 - 2 Walker — or a climber (7)
 - 3 Unshifty (4)
 - 4 Blacksmith perhaps — not making good money (6)
 - 5 Relations — may be paid (8)
 - 6 Artless (5)
 - 7 Advantageous rather than just (9)

- 10 Bringer of lawsuit (5)
- 12 Spanish lace veil (8)
- 15 Unaffected (7)
- 16 Slender (5)
- 18 Lacking experience — on the golf course? (5)
- 20 Adjoin (4)
- 23 Non-professional — balled (3)

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Saturday December 21 1996

The Guardian

the week

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Brian Keenan found out what it is to be a prisoner of ethnic conflicts in Beirut. But he did not need to go that far. He could have stayed in Belfast, the city of his birth. A place brave enough to escape its past?

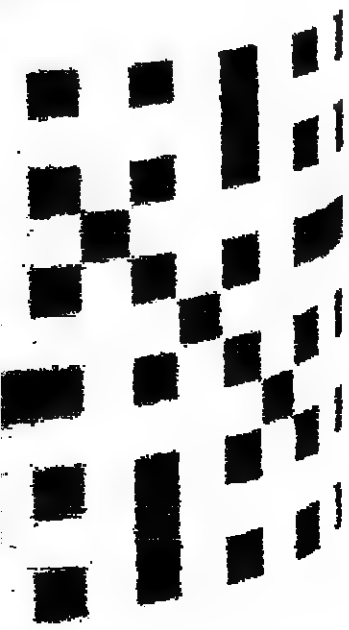
A hostage of history

THERE'S an Indian chief, his hanging around the back streets of Belfast, if you know where to look for him. I wasn't sure if he would still be there. I remember my father walking me hand in hand through the great sombre mill houses and grain stores that marked out Belfast's dockland. Not far from these were the bulky but bland commercial offices of the shippers and importers. Their bulk and weight seemed awesome to my seven-year-old mind. I was glad of my father's reassuring hand, but I was still intimidated about going to see the Indian chieftain. "You see, up there," said my father, pointing to a great stone face that looked out from one side of an arched gateway. I looked at the huge face becoming bigger as my father hoisted me on to his shoulders. Though I was now nine feet tall the face still stared down at me. The warrior's head was massive. The streets were thronged as I walked down Royal Avenue towards the area, where, as a child 40 years ago, I had stood with my father. It was November, and the

early Christmas shoppers were mingling with the lunch-time office workers and shop assistants scuttling in and out of various bars and cafés. The sense of bustle and pre-Christmas cheer had not dispelled my anxiety. The city's peace was fragile and looked mockingly towards the season of peace and goodwill. But I thought, that's the nature of this city, it thrives and survives on nervous energy. As if 26 years of the Troubles had become a routine of electric-shock therapy that the citizens barely noticed, yet which they couldn't live without, like some kind of hideous addiction. Had my old Indian been bulldozed out of existence like so many other parts of inner-city Belfast? I noticed the Albert Clock, a 60-ft high replica of Big Ben, as it struck two o'clock. It looked like the whole structure was leaning to the right. I crossed the road to check. Sure enough, the famous old clock was doing just that. Time was leaning to the right, just as the various political groupings in the city were taking up more entrenched and threatening

The Crown, Belfast... good best comes before bad news
PHOTOGRAPH BY MELVIN BOYDSON/STAMP
positions. I thought I'd found the building with my old Red Indian, the giant reddish-brown facade of which was now sadly dilapidated and beyond repair. My eyes scanned it. There was the Ethiopian's head surrounded by pomegranates. He had fat lips and a flat nose, and huge ears with earrings that a gymnast could swing from. Beside him was an Indian, but not a Red Indian. Pineapples, grapes, and pumpkins surrounded him. He had black eyes and huge flowing whiskers and his lips were pursed in a kiss. There was an eastern sultan beside him crowned with a majestic turban. I had forgotten about all these faces and was suddenly remembering them as my eyes danced urgently towards my Indian chieftain. His headdress of feathers lay back into the stone as though a wind was blowing through them. He had a long nose and set mouth, but his eyes were huge and soft. I looked at them, half realising why after 40 years I had

to B315




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the week that was

Them on them

The global view
FRANTIC parents are forking over anywhere from \$200 to \$1,200 to bring home 'Tickle Me Elmo'...

horrific ritual of getting on a first name basis called a Brumdersaft...

IN Poland a guest is supposed to arrive, eat and drink as commanded...

THE Ministry of Communications is inviting individuals and companies to come up with a slogan for the Icelandic tourism industry...

Us on us

The British view
Sport's worst-kept secret came officially out into the open as Wimbledon was named as the venue of Britain's new \$180 million National Stadium...

den tools, has managed another great disappearing trick. Lambeth Council sleuths now have to grapple with the curious case of the garage gone walkabout...

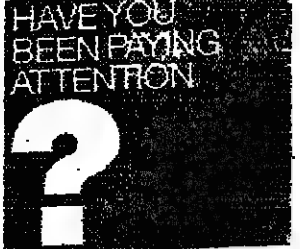
The town hall that brought you the million missing bricks and 720 missing mowers and gar-

Stray dogs in west Berkshire are to be implanted with a microchip containing information about their identities...



THEME OF THE WEEK TURKEYS

As the turkey season begins, it is worth reflecting on the political landscape...



- 1. Which lover of the blues is sending the Spice Girls a Christmas card?
2. Left Scepterman isn't sending the Spice Girls a Christmas card. Why?
3. 'There has been a full and frank debate in the Blair household'...

MP who was economical with the bed

This week last year December 19, 1995

A YEAR ago, David Ashby took the Sunday Times to court to clear his name after allegations of homosexuality...



Unhappy families... David and Silvana
disgusted the liberals, as one of six Tory MPs on the select committee who voted against a handgun ban...

donned a mask he wears at night for his amnesia, suggesting this would bar homosexual activity...

tried to contact him several times, Mrs Ashby has said, 'but he never returns my calls'...

field porters - love the Queen Mum and bash the queers, he said of the local party...

Silvana Ashby's 'secretarial' salary paid from her husband's £42,000 office costs allowance...

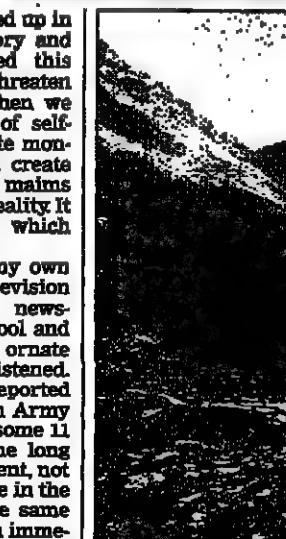
Ashby has refused to comment on the case, but this month wrote an epilogue to Great Parliamentary Scandals by Matthew Parris...

Answers, bottom left of this page

A hostage of history

4 page 13 remembered this face rather than the others. As I walked away I could only think how imponderable, yet accepting and understanding...

knowledge that I was shared up in that peculiar net of history and identity that has plagued this town...



felt that by repeating the phrase 'not too bad' often enough, it interposed a veil of selfishness between himself and the suffering...

renewing itself along ancient and unstable fault lines. I told him about the old Albert Clock tilting sideways...

new analysis. There can be no going back... Sure there still are neurotics and psychopaths out there...

- Quiz answers
1. Mrs Thatcher, who was touched to be called the original Spice Girl.
2. Because she claims the Spice Girls 'Say You'll Be There' plagiarises her Helmut pop anthem 'Come To Me'...

A few hours later I sat in the Crown Bar - a renowned watering hole in the city I was wondering whether changes in myself had blinkered my vision...

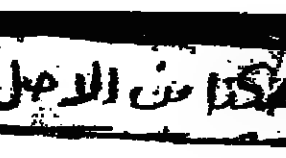
Some weeks later, I called to see a friend. Davy Hammond is even older than the man I had encountered in the ghostly moment in the pub...

I sat back in Davy's small box-room of a library and listened as he talked of the struggle between territorial piety and imperial power...

It was like hearing my Red Indian speak.

There are things being discussed that the press never hears about, and that are ongoing. It's a

There are things being discussed that the press never hears about, and that are ongoing. It's a



An author at four, the future of university student Ruth Davies seven years on is bright, to put it mildly

Eleven into 147 will go

THE JOANNA COLES INTERVIEW

"HELLO, would you like to know the definition of a second?" Ruth Davies demands, and before I can sit down, she is telling me anyway: "It's 9.19263177 cycles of radiation, um, corresponding to the transition between the two hyperfine levels of the ground state of the caesium 133 atom!"

"I didn't know there was a definition of a second," remarks her older sister Katie from the sofa, where she is absently nursing her four-week-old baby.

"Well, there's a definition of almost everything, isn't there?" says Ruth's mother.

Uh-oh, I haven't even taken my coat off yet, what have I stumbled into, I think bleakly, wondering how best to approach an 11-year-old girl bursting with an IQ of 147. From under her jagged fringe she gives a short, shy smile.

Ruth Davies smiled properly the day after she was born. Seven months later she started talking. "More choo," those were her first words," her mother giggles. Ruth started word-processing aged two.

At the age of four she wrote a book called *My Little Duck*. On the back she wrote *Other Titles By This Author include . . . The sequel was called And Susie Wanted This*. "I thought that was a strange title," says Mrs Davies. "Well, they call books things like that, don't they," says Ruth, tidy in her school uniform of grey jumper, trousers and bright blue tie.

We are sitting in the family home on New Road in Belper, Derbyshire, which seems pretty much like any other family home. There's a crowded dresser, fireplace, piano, weary sofa, a couple of armchairs and a sprinkling of left pens. Only two things strike me as unusual, there's no television, and on the table lie several plastic footstools — an education kit from the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child, normally available only in schools.

We'll come back to SPUC in a minute, but for now, here we all are; Ruth, Ruth's mother Mrs Davies; Ruth's older sister Katie and her son Isaac, Ruth's nephew. Intermittently we are noisily joined by Peter and Mary, Ruth's younger siblings, and Paul, Katie's first son (now five and the same age as Mary, his aunt) whom Katie had when she was 16 and who is still living at home. (She went back to start her A levels when he was 12 weeks old.)

There are three more sisters, Clare, Anna and Sarah, who have all left home, and another sister, Jane, died of brain damage when she was three. Dad, still at work, teaches maths and computing.

I have come because I am curious to know what it's like to discover a very clever child in the family. A child cleverer than she was genuinely absorbed by books from the age of five months; a child so clever she attends special classes at Warwick University on Saturdays, and is taking an O level in psychology by correspondence.

The idea came from the Gifted Child Society who, understanding Ruth was frustrated at primary school, recommended Mrs Davies give the local college a ring and suggest her daughter take some extra-curricular courses.

"The college said fine, then I told them she was 10 and they said 'No thank you'. They said adult students would resent a 10 year-old sitting next to them!"

"I wouldn't have minded," Ruth pipes up, "though I would like to spend all my time with adults, I like friends of my own age."

When did Mrs Davies realise Ruth was different from the rest of her brood?

"Sarah, my oldest daughter, did a dissertation on gifted children, and Ruth typed a lot of it up on the word-processor — because she's been very good on it since she was



Tidy mind, shame about the floor . . . Ruth Davies in reading mode. On the back cover of her first stint as an author, she wrote *Other Titles By This Author include . . .* PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN ROBERTSON

two — and she recognised herself. I'd been ignoring it in a way, I thought it was simpler if they were all the same. Which reminds me I bought you a textbook today Ruth, on psychology."

"Oh great," says Ruth, returning from the kitchen with an apple crammed in her smile. Does she have a sense of being clever? "I know I'm more intelligent than half the people in my class."

"Gran-ma," shouts Paul bounding in with Mary. "Gran-ma, can I have a sandwich?"

At the age of nine, Ruth insisted on learning algebra, but her teachers declined. The Derbyshire Education Authority does not allow pupils to be "accelerated" beyond their age-group.

After psychological tests showed she had the understanding of an adult, Ruth was finally accepted by the local Catholic comprehensive in September — the only school prepared to take her a year early.

"I don't like to criticise teachers," says Mrs Davies, "there are lots of them in our family — but at her last school, one said to me Ruth's working very hard and she's making us work very hard too! We don't have anything to offer her." Ruth stares out of the window. "She's cleverer than me!" says her mum.

Her daughter remains silent. Indeed, for much of the time, she looks as if she's in her own world,

'Sarah did a thesis on gifted children, and Ruth typed it up on the word-processor — she's been very good on it since she was two'

surfacing only to answer questions politely. She's unpreoccupied but confident enough to rebuff my attempts at encouraging smiles with the odd, suspicious stare. I later discover a local journalist once quoted her in an interview without even talking to her.

What else does she do when she's not studying? "I play the trumpet and piano," she says, clambering on to the piano stool, when I ask her to demonstrate. Mrs Davies suggests Peer Gynt. Katie prefers *Dangerous Journey*, which Ruth pulls off with a certain trundling style.

"I like the Warwick classes, because the teacher takes notice of what you say," she says abruptly. In the summer, the family camped in Yorkshire so Ruth could attend a summer school aimed at advanced children. "We did a lot of work," she grins, perking up as she talks about work.

"The tutors said they were doing a week and a half's work each day," interrupts Mrs Davies. "They told me Ruth is seriously underachieving because she's not regularly asked to do these kind of things. The guy who was running the course said she's quite eccentric."

"What does eccentric mean," asks Ruth.

"Nuts!" her mother giggles. "What about her other hobbies? I write poetry. I'll go and see if I can find some," and she scram-

bles off her knees, returning almost immediately with a sheaf of papers.

This is the first poem: *Behind a locked and heavy door, lies so much information, but I don't know where adults keep the key.*

It seems they want to hold me back in my education, are they scared of what I just might see?

For ten long years I asked and I was always told to wait. You are too young, so just slow down they say.

I yearn to learn, please teach me now, and don't procrastinate. Unlock that door and help me on my way.

Does she feel different to other kids? "Well, how many other girls wear trousers and don't care what their hair looks like," Katie butts in from the sofa.

"Pandora wears trousers," counters Ruth crossly. "Mum-my the bread's out," Mary shouts from the kitchen.

Does she get picked on as a swot? "Not really."

"She was the first altar girl at our church," her mother declares. "Our Lady of Perpetual Suffering . . ." murmurs Ruth.

Mrs Davies: "When the Pope finally said girls could go on the altar, Ruth wrote a letter to the priest saying 'I want to be an altar girl' and she stood by the door waiting for him to pass and said 'Well . . .?' And the next week she

was an altar girl!" Ruth: "I'm a member of three bands, a Guide, a member of the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child and an aviation studies group which studies how aeroplanes fly. And I read, a lot, currently *Lord Of The Flies* . . ."

Mrs Davies: "She got told off for reading *Of Mice And Men*. They told her it was too old for her."

Ruth: "But I was really enjoying it. It was so full of emotion."

Mrs Davies: "They used to use her at school as another teacher, there was a queue at her desk of children. She'd be up at midnight saying 'What can I do?'"

Ruth: "I'm going to bin my apple."

Does she have a boyfriend? "No."

Does she know yet what she'd like to do when she's older? "I want to study the psychology of the unborn child. Why? 'Because I went to a SPUC conference on it. You know they've found out babies can hear tunes, they're going to see if they can distinguish different tunes.'"

The Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child features strongly in the Davies family. Katie made the local paper's front page when she was ejected forcibly from the teacher's fair at Derby University, after trying to set up a SPUC stand.

Confusingly, Katie's son Paul is now in the same class as his Aunt

Mary. Mrs Davies (excitedly): "Both of them were completely unplanned, but it worked out really well."

Katie: "We both got told off by doctors. I was too young, Mum was too old."

Mrs Davies: "They talk down to you."

Katie: "You get so patronised."

Mrs Davies (furious): "You go in and say you're pregnant and they offer you an abortion!"

Katie (splenetic): "They start getting the green forms out of the drawer."

Mrs Davies: "They tell you you'll be better soon, it's awful."

Katie: "Dreadful."

Mrs Davies (anger subsiding): "They're like, 'Did you plan this child? No? Why have it then?'"

Katie: (Sadly): "They always think I want an abortion."

From the dresser, Mrs Davies pulls out some old projects which Ruth has written about babies and then points to a series of 25 cards hung on a string above the fire. It's an advent calendar, made from last year's Christmas cards which Ruth has cut up and embellished with poems. Each night the family lights a candle and opens one of the cards to read the poem.

What about music, I ask finally, which bands does Ruth like? "The Cranberries." And what about a television, would she like one? "No. There's always lots of conversations here."



Left is good but it's a lot more fun on the right

HAVE just returned from New York, where I was a guest at a Republican fund-raising dinner. It was \$500 a plate and most of the people there were congratulating themselves on their party's triumphs. Three men were singled out for special praise, described as "honorees" and given an award, to much applause.

To explain how I came to be at this bash is a story in itself, but let's just say I was there as a spectator rather than a celebrant. It seems that the Republicans are doing well in the State of New York, and (so they say) they are also doing well for New York State. Marginal tax rates are down and criminal conviction rates are up. If you listened uncritically to the speeches that night, you'd think that this is all that politics is about.

Liberalism continues to be a term of abuse. As one supporter patiently explained to me, a liberal is simply a person who says "what's mine is mine and what's yours is

mine". Taxation is just a fraud. The government steals money from the thrifty and then gives it to the indigent, thereby demoralising them. Liberals are thus incompetent crooks; they first take our money and then they misspend it. They demotivate both the taxpayer and the ultimate recipient of the taxed money. If we can't keep the money we earn, why work? If we can get money without working, then again, why work?

And as, during the course of the evening, this argument is repeated (developed if isn't), the invisible connection between the crime rate and the tax rate becomes apparent. Tax rates are crime rates — records of thefts committed by the IRS against the vulnerably affluent. It's not that bringing the tax rate and the crime rate down are merely related activities; in some profound way, for these people, it's the same activity.

This was the doctrine being preached, interminably and with-

out nuance, at the dinner. But if you believe, as I do, that taxation is a legitimate means of enlarging access to scarce resources (by funding hospitals, schools, public transport, etc) you will find nothing but a dimly impoverished self-interest in the Republican stance. Of course, it has its supporters over here too. What we might call the "delegitimising" of taxation as an instrument of social policy is one of the legacies of the Thatcher ministries. Indeed, it is a legacy that both the Major Government and the Blair Opposition have inherited.

Am I alone in finding slightly depressing the enthusiasm with which the Labour Party has positively embraced this legacy? What has happened to the principle of the redistribution of wealth?

Still, listening to these alienating and unsympathetic dinner speeches made me ponder why one takes pleasure in, and can learn from, so much of the writing and teaching of those on the right.

It was a slightly guilty thought, and it was connected with my long held suspicion that, if confronted with the straight choice of a desert island subscription to either the

There is still something of the Roundheads versus Cavaliers about the New Statesman and the Spectator

Spectator of the New Statesman, I might be inclined to choose the former.

This isn't a criticism of the new editor of the Statesman; in the few weeks he's been running the magazine he has hugely improved it. The point is, rather, that however good the Statesman becomes, the

Spectator will continue to offer special, irreplaceable, pleasures. It was also prompted by reading, on the plane over to New York, Eugene Genovese's book *The Southern Tradition*, which is a critical celebration of the conservatism of the American South.

Genovese, a native New Yorker writing out of the marxist left, believes that southern conservatives have much to teach the left, especially regarding "the irrationalities of its radical egalitarianism".

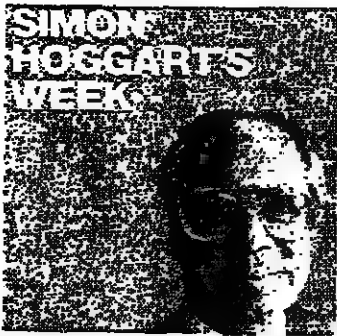
I think that the intellectual appeal of the right has to do with its challenge to the very premises of your own politics, and its many practical deficiencies. Confront writers who maintain, for example, that social justice is a mirage, or that taxation is state-sanctioned theft, and you take the measure of your own convictions.

They compel you not just to think, but to think against yourself. It's a bracing experience, and a welcome relief from debates

within the left, where everything that matters — and thus everything that is most questionable — is simply taken for granted.

And there is also the pleasure offered by a magazine such as the Spectator of a temporary absenteeism from the solemnities of the left. The right is less guilty about its frivolity than the left, for whom it is a distraction from the struggle. There is still something of the contrast between Roundheads and Cavaliers about the New Statesman and the Spectator. (The French critic Roland Barthes, taking issue with smaller sentiments, said that anyone who thought that people on the left were incapable of enjoying the inconsequential obviously didn't know anything about Barthes and his cigars. To which you feel like responding: if that's the best counter-example he can come up with, case proved.)

So, a seasonal thought: good will to all men, even Republicans. *Jeremy Hardy is on holiday*



SIMON HOGGART'S WEEK

Great sentiments, shame about the song

THE DUKE of Edinburgh has long been our national Basil Fawley, an unnerving blend of the sinister and the comic. (Or has he answered the week's great medical conundrum, by proving that the heart of a pig can beat in the breast of a man?) No wonder the royal family is dysfunctional. Imagine being raised by a man who equates gun laws with banning cricket bats.

It has a wonderful Fawleyesque logic. Like Basil's great "Kratona exploding, herds of wildebeeste sweeping majestically" speech, one can imagine him going on and on: "I mean, you might as well ban sausages just because someone got food poisoning. You could strangle someone with a curtain cord, couldn't you, are you going to ban curtains? Curtains? Eh? Are you going to ban curtains, then?"

This in a week when the "Dumblane children" got to number one in the charts with Knocking On Heaven's Door. I agree with their sentiments — I doubt if it will save a single life, but it would be wonderful to have a gun-free country, and this is the only way to start — and I hope they raise lots of money. I also feel for the parents, who will spend the rest of their lives suffering the ultimate,

unimaginable horror of knowing that their children spent their last few moments on earth in misery and terror.

But am I alone in thinking the record is a stunner? For a start, it's not the children at all, except in the chorus; instead it's some whiney local bloke, singing horrible whiney lyrics, proving that to be Bob Dylan it's not enough to be whiney — you need quite a lot of talent, too.

A CHANCE to meet up with Dillie Keane at dinner. (Her cabaret troupe, Fascinating Aida, opens at the Vaudeville in London next month. They are wonderful. Book now.) Dillie is a sharp observer of the whole showbiz scene — they don't call each other luvvie, but darling — and is a particular expert on the phrases you use when you've been to see a dear friend in some minor role at Pithochry or Penzance, and have to find a way of sounding complimentary without actually lying. "You were so brave" is a good one. So is "You must have found it such a challenge." "Well" said in an emphatic voice could mean either: "Such brilliance leaves me speechless," or alternatively "My God, what a disaster."

"That producer ought to be shot" is a good way of damning a play without actually blaming your friend. "To be quite honest, you were not in the company of equals," is majestically ambiguous.

The old union leader used to say: 'It's carrying democracy too far if you don't know the vote in advance'

My favourite, quite unanswerable, is: "I thought you made some absolutely fascinating choices."

ANNE Atkins, the vicar's wife who thinks there shouldn't be gay services in churches, has made the top six of the Today personality of the year poll — a pretty dubious honour these days. One of the people who nominated her said she was "compassionate". Mrs Atkins is now the agony aunt in the Daily Telegraph where, so far as I can see, she demonstrates her

compassionate nature by telling people, in effect: "I know it's rough, but God says you can't."

Her compassion, I gather, runs to believing that homosexuals shouldn't actually be locked up, but that they should stop whatever it is they are doing. What is so compassionate about telling a large proportion of the population that, through an accident of birth, they should not be permitted to have physical relationships, I have no idea. No doubt if only half the bigots in the country have phoned in, she'll win.

ANOTHER great mystery in John Major's life. Earlier this week he said in an interview that his pet name for his wife Norma was "Little Grub". On Wednesday she denied any knowledge of the term. "We don't have nicknames for each other," she said. "What rubbish."

I turn for enlightenment to Patrick Wright, whose hilarious cartoon biography of the Prime Minister is just out (Andre Deutsch, £5.99). He has Major's mother calling him all sorts of silly animal names, "my little wood wisp", "my tiny elephant seal" etc. Mr Wright tells me that this was pure invention on his own part. But he

does recall reading a quote from Major in the course of his researches in which he clearly stated years ago that his nickname for Norma was "Grub", without the "little". This still leaves the central puzzle. How is it possible for a man to have a pet name for his wife, a name to which he repeatedly calls attention, yet of which she is entirely unaware?

YOU can't excuse the Tory whips cheating this week. By your can easily understand it. By its nature, politics attracts a lot of control freaks, people who know what's best for the rest of us and are determined we should get it. The most controlling become whips, and there is nothing which causes more anguish in a whip than not knowing the result of a close vote. They simply cannot bear it, and will do almost anything to prevent it, even as we have seen, if it's completely crooked.

During the last Labour Government (which, as everyone seems to forget, had fallen to a minority of 15 when it finally collapsed) Eric Varley used to quote the old miners' union leader from his home town: "It's carrying democracy too far if you don't know the vote in advance."

SMALLWEED

SMALLWEED could scarcely believe what he saw on his TV screen on Thursday night. A shadow cabinet minister stood in the street and announced a senior member of the Royal Family as an "elitist aristocrat" who was "not of our real core". I fully expected to see some juvenile lead from Tony Blair's gymnasium department, clad in opera cloak and felt hat, rush from an alley and clamp a large chloroformed pad over the hapless spokesman's eyes. Failing that, there would clearly be a port about in time for the midnight news to provide, as these things like to say, some context. George Robertson a Dumblane resident himself... own children attended the school... understandably overwrought... none will regret more than he a somewhat ill-worded outburst...

Not even that. The skies remained yesterday morning much where they were the previous night. The number 259 bus ran as ever. Its lonely, sinuous course from Holborn to Fonder's End. No BBC instant telephone poll appeared showing 90 per cent of respondents calling for Robertson's head. Remarkable. And prompting this thought: could the unprecedented quietude with which every recent Labour leader has addressed the issue of monarchy have been a shade overdone?

ANOTHER historic breakthrough: a chart in yesterday's Guardian showed that three Government documents leaked to the press in the past two years emanated from the Department of Transport. That's all the more remarkable when the very existence of this department has been concealed from the press for almost a century.

Like so many sentimental notions which Thatcher tried to get rid of, this institution dates from the 1850s, when trams began to be swept off the roads of the nation. After years of valiant service across the points, was it right, some fearful junior minister said to have asked, to banish them to the scrap heap? Why not set aside some quiet corner of Britain to allow them to spend their years in happy retirement, to frolic in the sun like carthorses at the end of their service, or ponies freed from the pits?

So a sunny spot was found a few miles from Rutland Water, where even today a few surviving specimens — red-coated roadcars from Glasgow — continue to deport themselves among the more junior entrants from the only tramway borough left, Blackpool. One might have thought that long before now, some chancellor on the look-out for cuts would have taken the axe to this enterprise. But happily Kenneth Clarke is a fan, and frequently breaks his journey down the A1 to watch these old valiants at play. He even has dreams, it is said, of importing old street cars from Brussels and Amsterdam to give the place a European dimension. But don't say I told you, or someone like Michael Portillo will probably put a stop to it.

SEE the Government wants to stop us calling Major's stance on Europe a "wait and see" policy and to call it instead "Negotiate and Then Decide". This will never catch on. "Wait and see" has a homely feel which people instantly recognise, and know from their own experience often makes sense. It used to be commonplace — perhaps it still is — for parents pestered by children about what was coming to finish the meal, to reply: "It's wait-and-see pudding." This was usually respected. A response, on the other hand, of "It's Negotiate and Then Decide pudding" would have run the risk of derision and bun-throwing.

DISCONCERTING to read in a newspaper interview that leader of the UK Independence Party, Dr Alan Stead, has been asked to write the biographies of Thatcher, Howe, Kinnoch and others for the Oxford Companion to British History. That may have less to worry about, but if I were the European How I would not be over the moon.

Stead (what a curious name!) anagram of desk, as you probably noticed) is co-author with Chris Cook of the well-respected Penguin history of Post War Britain (to be consulted with confidence — R. Hattersley) the fourth edition of which I have in my hand as I write (except that I've just put it down to type this sentence). This contains on page 686 a passage which strongly suggests that someone (and not I suspect, Mr Cook) has got slightly carried away by boiling emotion.

The book's final judgment on the Thatcher years is that she was a weak prime minister who was not in control of her Cabinet. Hence, it's argued, her inability to sack Heseltine before he resigned or get rid of naughty Mark-stalking Nigel, and her inability to stop Hurd and Major rather than make Nicholas Ridley chancellor. How's that? Hattersley told her to? etc. How's resignation is treated with some disdain: he had recently been giving lectures "explaining that he no longer knew what national sovereignty meant". Omnibus.

SMALLWEED'S thought for the week, on 271 (part of an occasional series starting with no 271), "Philosophy is the bottom shelf of theology." (Assistant in Exeter bookshop giving guidance to a customer).

The long good buys

HEAD TO HEAD

It's time to polish off the Christmas shopping. Oh no! We're being turned into shopaholics, says Big Issue editor John Bird. But I adore it, replies Linda Grant, author of a novel on shopping and politics

Dear Linda,

I HATE shopping. Not shopping for essentials, those things that you need. But that other kind of shopping. That shopping as cultural activity. That retail therapy, as it is often called. It seems to me that shopping as an end in itself is bad for your mental health.

I agree with Socrates. Having been shown over the marketplace, he was asked what he thought of all the things on sale. "It's surprising. I didn't realise how many things there were that I had no use for." Or words to that effect.

Shopping as an end in itself is about chasing an elusive sense of satisfaction. That ultimate piece of clothing. That ultimate piece of household junk. Never satisfied, the appetite remains but the cupboard fills up. In some ways we seem to be repeating the orians with their desperate need to fill up their lives with crap. Stuffed birds, stuffed wardrobes and stuffed up people. And always running away from the ugliness of their little lives.

Retail therapy drives people

ever onward to the detriment of their sense of well-being and to the detriment of their pocket. Personal inadequacies are overcome by the next purchase, not unlike a drug user. It is a sad statement about modern life that shopping is less and less about want, and more and more about getting a temporary buzz.

The damage that is being done to people's minds goes on apace. We are encouraged to feel empty unless we are participating. Dissatisfaction runs through all generations as younger and younger people get hooked on aimless shopping.

But there is also a bigger issue hidden behind the compulsive shopper. Think of all the energy that goes into whetting the shoppers' appetite. The production of products from scarce resources, the waste of electricity, packaging and a whole plethora of activities that go into keeping the appetite supplied.

I can't see how the modern world can survive its flimsy resources being wasted so that people can shop aimlessly. Per-



ILLUSTRATION: STEVE CAPLIN

you get value for your money, you need to look at lots of things and spend your money wisely — hence more time mooching round the shops, not less.

As my Dad used to say, the poor can't afford to buy cheap goods. As for your argument about shopaholics — well, I and most other people drink (occasionally to excess) but we are not alcoholics. And if I am never satisfied with the things I've bought and keep wanting to buy more, so am I never satisfied with the number of books I've read or CDs I've listened to. Same thing.

What have you got against people buying things to make the room look nice? Are you saying that objects like vases and flowers and table-lamps and rugs and pictures — in other words all that girly stuff — don't have a use?

To do so is to argue against all visual art. If an object looks nice, please the eye, then of course it has a use. Our surroundings are terribly important to us and how we decorate or furnish them is, in a limited way, an expression of our creative selves. It sounds like you're saying that a hammer to knock in the nail for the picture hook is useful but the picture isn't.

Regards,
Linda

Dear Linda,

Many people buy crap because it is the very act of buying that is the important part of the transaction. They may even buy well-made things but buying is the high.

How can you deny that much shopping has become a mass, wasteful, aimless activity. That it uses up precious resources and makes little contribution other than keeping many people in cheap labour.

Go to Knightsbridge and Covent Garden and you'll see a lot of wealthy people buying rubbish. It is simplistic of you to suggest that people only buy crap because they cannot afford the good stuff.

Buying books and CDs as a means of making a room look nice seems a bit phoney. I certainly am not against the visual arts. But vacuous accumulation is what cheeses me off. Get a life.

I come back to my original point. Shopping as an end in itself cannot go on. It destroys minds, economies and the environment. The crisis is coming whether you like it or not.

Do have a lovely Christmas.
John

Dear John,

I'VE got a life, thanks, full of interested and varied activities: reading, seeing films, writing, travelling and, yes, shopping. You keep saying that buying is the high but where's the evidence? It's just a gut feeling on your part.

I come back to my point about this being about different male and female cultures. Men think that if they want something they can go out, buy it in 10 minutes and come home again. It's the old hunter/gatherer distinction.

Men said, right, I'm off to spear a woolly mammoth. It's nasty, dangerous work but someone has to do it. I'll be back as quick as I can.

Women go out, wander about, see some wheat here, a pebble there and pass-shell on the shore and think, humm. Put those together and they'll brighten up that rather dark corner of the cave.

Anyway, I hope you get some Christmas presents you like. Want to make a date to go to Selfridges for the sales?

Season's greetings,
Linda

Linda Grant's novel, *The Cast Iron Shore*, was published in June

Dear John,

BOXING! There's an activity conducive to mental health. People buy crap because they can't afford to buy good stuff. To make sure

haps there may come a time when the luxury of purchasing crap may be a thing of the past.

Yours,
John

Dear John,

WELL, it's your own fault if you find yourself buying crap — obviously you can't spend enough of that all-important time wandering round the shops looking at what they've got and ensuring you don't make a wrong choice.

I adore shopping. I find it both relaxing and pleasurable. And it is therapeutic. It cured my lower back problems one day because it made me stop thinking about myself and focus outward.

My mother, who suffers from senile dementia, is at her most coherent and whole a personality when I take her from the parking home out to town and she can interact with the world at the shops. She can't follow the plot of a film and, yes, I know I could take her to a park but she's never liked nature.

Like anything else, shopping can be damaging if taken to excess but most people are not shopaholics. It is outrageously insulting of you to assume that people who shop are "running away from the ugliness of their little lives".

I spent four hours Christmas shopping on Saturday, then came home and spent the afternoon reading Gila Sereny's book on Albert Speer, which I'd bought on the same spree. Like most men, I

expect you do not characterise shopping for books or records or indeed copies of the Big Issue as shopping at all. Men have defined shopping as the purchase of those goods that they themselves are not interested in, like clothes and things to do with the home, which you want us to believe are shallow, trivial and materialistic.

Yet it is men who will spend large sums on a season ticket to a football club, which will support the grossly inflated wages of the players. What is sport for? What's the point of it? Yet men treat it as a religion, while shopping is degraded because it is essentially a female sphere.

To me, part of the joy of it is looking at what people have made, whether it is a table or a dress. All these things are the products of someone's brain and imagination. You talk of a whole plethora of activities that keep the appetite supplied. If these activities were ended, what do you think the people carrying them out would do to earn a living? Sell the Big Issue?

Regards,
Linda

Dear Linda,

BUT the crap is there to buy and people buy it. High Streets are full of crap shops. The fact that you don't buy it and I don't buy it is beside the point.

I was pleased to read that your back cleared up by you not thinking about it; that all you needed

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Doonesbury



BY GARRY TRUDEAU

Lovers in for the kill or the thrill?

Why do some women find convicted murderers adorable? Luke Harding and Stephen Bates report on romances like that of Lil Simon, who has travelled to America to marry killer Nick Campas

NEXT Thursday in small-town America a rather unusual wedding will take place between a middle-aged hairdresser from Bournemouth and a native American from the Yukit tribes of northern California. Watched by her four children, Lil Simon will go through a traditional Indian marriage ceremony. As guests sip punch and music plays softly, she will lie down on the floor with her groom, Nick Campas, aka Broken Arrow. They will be wrapped in a marriage blanket as a tribal chief chants and throws herbs at them. There will be brief congratulations and a few photos. But the conventional pleasures of a wedding night will have to be postponed — 10 years, to be precise. Wardens from Washington State Reformatory will march the groom away from the visiting room back to his cell, where he'll be banged up. Broken Arrow is a convicted killer who stabbed his victim with a steak knife. Consequently, he and his bride have a long wait ahead of them: conjugal visits are forbidden by prison regulations and his earliest release date is May 3, 2006. This romance is one unlikely consequence of the dark events of May 15, 1988, when Nick Campas was invited back to the house of a 31-year-old single mother, Linda Thomas, for a drinking session. In the early hours of the morning he murdered her.

For Tacoma police department, in the far north-west of America, it was an unremarkable homicide. Detective John Pike, who investigated the murder eight years ago, struggles to recall even the barest details. "There are certain murders which stick out in your mind. This wasn't one of them," he confesses. On the night of the murder, Broken Arrow had met Linda Thomas in a downtown tavern, where they shot a few games of pool. Sitting in her lounge later, they drank several cans of beer and listened to CDs at full volume. At 8am he got up to leave. But then he took a steak knife from the kitchen and stabbed his victim repeatedly in the head and chest. Broken Arrow, aged 39, was arrested shortly afterwards in the dead woman's sports car, trying to sell her video recorder. During his trial he showed no remorse and was sentenced to 40 years, lowered on appeal. He is still likely to serve 16 years. But the killing was to have a curious epilogue. Last April, as he sat in his cell, he received a letter from Lil, whose first marriage lasted nine years and who claims to have had another nine-year relationship with a millionaire. She had answered a newspaper advertisement seeking pen-pals for prisoners in the UK and abroad. Almost instantly, they embarked on a giddy epistolary courtship, exchanging hundreds of passionate love notes and tapes, as well as photographs. "We just seemed to click and the more he wrote, the more intimate his letters became," Lil said. "We



The course of true love... engaged couple Nick Campas and Lil Simon, top; Marc Dutroux, object of much motherly affection, above; and happily-married Barry and Mary Rutter, left

were on the same wavelength and it wasn't long before I fell head over heels in love with him. "I wrote to him trying to explain my feelings and he wrote back saying: 'If you're trying to tell me that you've fallen in love with me, all I can say is that I lost my heart to you weeks ago.'" Lil flew to Seattle to get to know Broken Arrow better. On her third visit, he proposed. She accepted instantly, after spending just 63 hours in his company. "When he asked me to marry him I was thrilled — I've never felt this way about anyone before," she said. Earlier this month Lil shut the front door of her Bournemouth semi for the last time. With her suitcases and children — Scott, aged 17, 15-year-old twins Vicky and Dee, and Guy, aged five, she set off to start a new life. Campas has signed his house in Tacoma over to Lil and his mother has given her her own engagement and wedding rings. Were she an isolated example, Lil Simon could be dismissed as a naive, romantic fantasist deserving pity rather than scorn. But she

exemplifies an increasing phenomenon — women who fall in love with men who kill. In Germany, Britain, the United States, Belgium — wherever there is a regulated penal system — women fall in love with dangerous, often crazy men, imprisoned for horrific crimes. Most astonishing is the case of Marc Dutroux, the Belgian electrician currently under investigation for gruesome paedophile murders, who has acquired an unlikely zodiac of middle-aged women. Each week, Dutroux gets dozens of largely friendly letters in the maximum security jail at Arlon, near the Luxembourg border. Admirers have sent him money to buy a television set and proposed marriage. They even sent him a teddy bear for his 40th birthday, which he celebrated recently. What seems to motivate many of his female fans is not sexual desire, but maternal love. One, Anna, a mother with children, tried to send him some pyjamas after he complained he was cold at night. Last month, she gave an interview to a Belgian newspaper admitting she writes to Dutroux

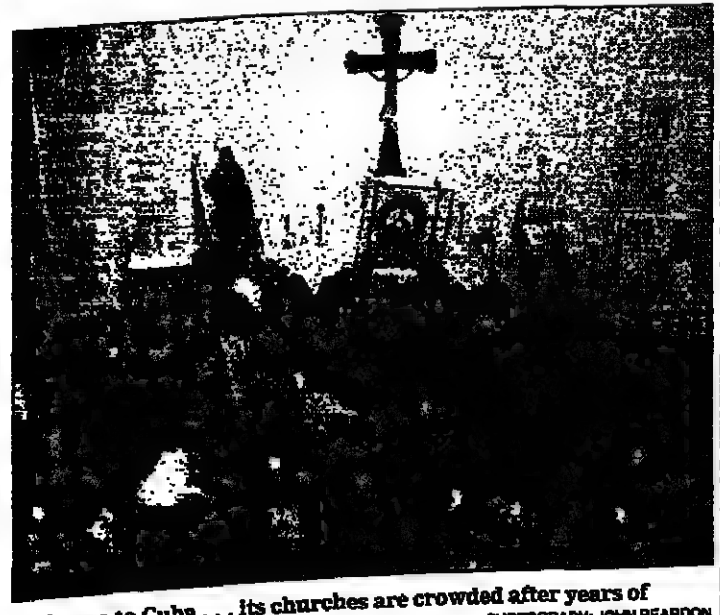
several times a week. But why does she correspond with a man who allegedly allowed two eight-year-old girls, imprisoned in a makeshift dungeon in his home, to starve to death? "Because I am human and he has got enough people disparaging him. He is not the first and he won't be the last paedophile." Psychologists give several different explanations for this phenomenon, not all satisfactory. Undoubtedly, evil men have always had an appeal, a compelling fatal magnetism, for some women. In the case of Jan Felker, a Surrey banker whose husband was executed last month after serving 14 years on death row, long-term friendship turned into romance only after many years of correspondence. Jan's relationship differed from others involving such inmates because there was compelling evidence to suggest her husband, Wayne, jailed for raping and killing a waitress in 1981, was innocent. She started writing in November 1991, rising at 5am every day and replying to his "very humor-

ous" letters. Only with the execution of Briton Nick Ingram in April 1995, which brought home how close her correspondent was to death, did she become romantically involved. After one execution date had come and gone, the couple married secretly in prison in Georgia last May. Since her husband's death, Jan has been answering letters of condolence at her home in Weybridge, many from other inmates on death row. How did her relationship with Wayne differ from her earlier failed marriage? She responds with painful honesty. "He made me feel extremely special. He put me on a pedestal, he idolised me," she says. "It was hard not to feel special and I never had to fight for that position. He would have been a very hard act to follow. He was exceptional — humorous, witty and intelligent." Most women who fall in love with convicted killers emphasise the individual reasons for their romance. They reject the tag of "murder couples". They are generally convinced of their partner's innocence or that he has changed and is no longer capable of murder. Most have experienced disappointing relationships and are divorced or separated. They often suffer from low self-esteem. Critics might point out that men in prison are less likely to run away than those on the outside, who have betrayed them in the past. When long-term prisoners are finally released, most of these relationships invariably fail. Certainly, infamy has its own curious rewards. Peter Sutcliffe gets many marriage proposals, as does Jeremy Bamber, who was convicted of murdering five members of his family at an Essex farmhouse in 1965. Harry Roberts, jailed for life at the Old Bailey in 1966 for the murders of three unarmed policemen, also gets many letters from women explaining the erotic acrobatics they would like to perform for him. In Germany, serial killer Thomas Holst was sprung from jail by his besotted Israeli psychotherapist Tamar Segal, who met him while he was in prison. Before they met and fell in love Segal, now in jail herself for aiding his escape, was a lesbian. Dr Glenn Wilson, reader at the Institute of Psychiatry, London, points to the "hyper-masculinity" of convicted killers. His analysis is unashamedly Darwinian. "Women see a man who is completely anti-social, living on the

fringes of society, who has a high dose of testosterone. He is the kind of male not to be trifled with. They see that as having survival value for their offspring." Jan Arriens, secretary of Lifelines, which provides pen-friends for people on death row in the US, emphasises childhood and adolescence. "A lot of [these] women have generally suffered some kind of abuse in childhood and have learned to identify with abuse. There is a fatal attraction with people on death row for a certain kind of woman." Arriens, who cautions women not to get romantically involved with prisoners they write to (some 2,000 women in the UK write), refers to the "candle-lit dinners on paper" which drive many of these relationships very hard to be romantic on paper and forget all the day-to-day difficulties you get in real life. **M**OST marriages made in prison do not last. There are the indignities of visiting — crowded rooms, vigilant wardens and the low-lying tables — which make any kind of physical intimacy impossible. Couples operate under conditions of great strain. Some, however, do succeed. Mary Rutter met her husband Barry while he was working at a bird sanctuary in Bognor Regis while on day-release from Ford Open Prison. Barry was 27, she was 31, and they were both young men in his twenties and served 14 years before being released. He is now back inside. His parole licence was revoked earlier this year after he was caught drink-driving a second time. His chronic alcoholism, which, Mary believes, could have been avoided by counselling. She stresses that she knew nothing about Barry's background when they first met. She also believes her husband should have been convicted of manslaughter, not murder. "I did fancy him the first time I saw him. I put it to the back of my mind. I thought I have got two kids. What guy is going to want to be involved with me?" Meanwhile, in Washington State Reformatory, Broken Arrow gets ready for his nuptials. He is marrying in haste next Thursday. But he can allow himself a wry smile at the expense of his critics. After all, he has plenty of leisure in which to repent.

Fidel Castro cancelled Christmas, but, says Stephen Smith, Cubans queue for Midnight Mass

Dreaming of a red Christmas



Welcome to Cuba... its churches are crowded after years of official disapproval of religion

IT WAS Christmas Eve in Havana and the fatted pig across the street was getting his. A black man who looked like he had once boxed kept the pig on the roof behind the Cabaret Las Vegas, a nightspot where the girls danced to salsa till dawn. Early on the morning of the 24th, there was a good deal of squealing coming from the roof. After several long minutes, it ceased; in the late afternoon, the man could be seen out on the roof again, gnawing a bone. It was the coldest I had known Cuba. The temperature never fell below the middling teens centigrade during the day, but there was *mucho aire*, as the Cubans said, a lot of air. In the evenings Hilda, the woman I was renting an apartment from in old, dilapidated central Havana, would put a pan of water on for my bucket bath (except on the days when there was no gas, shortages of this fuel compounding problems of electricity cuts and restricted water supply). I wanted to be in Cuba at Christmas last year because I was intrigued by travel agents' reports that December and January were the most popular months for the island, despite or perhaps because of the fact that the closest visitors would get to a white Christmas would be a slushy *daiquiri*. Tourists who spent Yuletide in the Caribbean presumably fancied the idea of getting away from European winter. And it was reasonable to assume that some of them were hard-core Christmas-haters; or at the very least, that they were ill-disposed to the tinsel trappings of the holidays

back home. If so, then Cuba was perfect for them. In what was almost literally a pantomime of hard-heartedness, Fidel Castro had cancelled Christmas. I could never understand why Castro's critics in Washington and Miami hadn't made more of this. There was good knocking copy in the irony that the man whose beard was almost as well-known as St Nick's was the Scrooge of the Caribbean. Perhaps he was aware of this danger. In an interview in 1988, he fondly recalled his childhood Christmases. "Christmas Eve was a wonderful thing, because it meant 15 days of vacation — and not just 15 days of vacation, but 15 days of festive atmosphere and treats: cookies, candies and nougat." Cuban children wrote their begging letters not to Santa Claus but the Three Wise Men. The future guerrilla and revolutionary asked them for cars, trains and movie cameras, but received toy trumpets on three consecutive Noëls. "I should have become a musician," he joked. It all begged the question of why he had vetoed Christmas, the negligence of the Magi notwithstanding. In one sense, the most obvious impact of Fidel's decision to scrap Christmas was that December 25 was not a public holiday for Cubans. It was true that at one or two of the barren official *dinades*, assistants sat unconsidered at their counters like Bob Cratchit. But on Christmas morning, a truck laden with boxes of food pulled up outside Hilda's and began unloading at the *bodega*,

the ration shop, where they had decorated a small, false fir. These *bodegas* are used to offset hardship in the country's current sorry state. The regime calls it the "special period in time of peace" — the phrase of rationing and swinging cutbacks, apparently without end, which has accompanied the drying-up of aid from the former Soviet bloc and the tightening of a United States embargo. The *bodega* outside Hilda's place always seemed to have a queue, mainly of elderly people, waiting for it to open. Cubans were entitled to a daily bun. There were also four pounds of rice a month on the ration, and 10 ounces of red, green and black beans. "Sometimes there are months when you don't see soap," said Hilda wistfully. From time to time, there were savoury biscuits and sweets for the children. There was rooking oil "when it comes". **T**HERE was one bottle of rum per household per month, for 20 pesos. The state bestowed its secular blessing on marriage by giving newlyweds a cake, three boxes of beer, and a ration for clothes and shoes. When Hilda's sister got married, the Revolution gave towels. One reason I'd wanted to spend Christmas in Havana was mass on Christmas Eve. Walking at night to the Carmen, the nearest church to my apartment and the one Hilda attended, and seeing the Carmen statue lit up; Hilda telling me that this was the most *tranquilo* time of year; birds — or were they bats? — skittering around inside the cupola of the

church: this was the Cock Mass. The title suggested a dawning, a renewal, but also spoke of the country's mingled African and Spanish past. We arrived at the church early, by 11pm, and were soon clear why. It was packed. There were smartly turned out ladies of a certain age, courting couples, men in their best suits. A black man of about 45 was asleep at the end of our pew. In front of the monstrous sideboard of an altar was a Christmas tree — it wasn't real, but it was decked out with all the trimmings, including flashing lights. Homemade wreaths decorated the columns. People took a turn around the mezzanine of the Franciscan seminary next door, apparently in the forlorn hope of a becoming free by the time they returned to the church. The Cubans were queuing for Mass. For people so accustomed to standing in line, an hour's wait for God was not out of the way. Why were all these people here, I wondered. Did they all believe? Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve always draws a crowd, even in Britain. It remained a free, or more or less free show, in a country of poverty. But a Hollywood blockbuster was screening on Cuban television, an entirely cost-free alternative attraction. Hilda, her son Nico, and I had left it in the first place, having sat through a Brazilian soap opera, our makeshift Cuban family gathered in front of the television set on Christmas Eve. A sensitive issue about the de-recognition of Christmas in Cuba was what it meant for Christians, and, in a less immediate way, all

their fellow Cubans. Going to church had never been illegal in revolutionary Cuba, but for a time it had been very difficult. The closing of churches marked the nadir in Castro's relations with Christians. In his most trenchant statement, the *Comandante* explicitly denied that a single church door had been shut. But senior figures in the Catholic church told me that this was an untruth. Castro said Catholicism was the reign of Cuba's old, Spanish, slave-owning elite; perhaps this helps explain why Christmas was removed from the Cuban calendar: it wasn't regarded as a festival of the people. In the Carmen, the choir entered singing a carol. The priest brought up the rear, with a doll of Jesus. There was the campbhor smell of the censor. The priest, standing at the altar, was momentarily blinded by a cloud of incense. I talked to Hilda about going to church. Yes, she had always gone, she said. "Antes? Before?" "You weren't supposed to, you were afraid, and you thought that you were being watched, but you came," said Hilda. Stephen Smith is a reporter with Channel 4 News. This is an extract of *The Land of the Miracles*, published by Little, Brown on January 2. To order a copy for the special price of £16.99 inc p&p (r.p. £17.99) call Guardian Interactive on 0500 600102 or send a cheque payable to Guardian Interactive to 250 Western Avenue, London W8 6Z.

arts



The Lumière brothers' train thrilled audiences with a new technology that has become the vehicle of its own destruction. Later cinema-goers demanded more (King Kong) and more (Terminator 2). But at what price to the soul of the artform?

SHOOTING STARS

Rising: Natascha McElhone

... The young McElhone leaves LAMDA and makes for Regents Park. Not for a celebratory picnic, but for humble roles in the Open Air Theatre.

... But Lady Luck smiles on tall, blonde Natascha. Merchant-Ivory swoop for her, to play long-suffering Françoise Gilot in their Picasso biopic.

and away ... Her performance as lover to the cavalier Cubist wins great acclaim, and job offers duly follow.

Falling: Sylvester Stallone

... The big-shot behind Rocky and Rambo can do no wrong. Except try his hand at comedy. Sleepy Or My Mom Will Shoot, anyone?

... Sly announces that his films are 'stupid'. The 50-year-old bruiser now wants the Al Pacino role.

... Daylight, released this week, sees Sly in action mode yet again just as he announces that he's moving to London — Florida is too dangerous.

Art forms of the century

At the close of its 100th year, cinema is haunted by a terror of its own demise. Jonathan Romney on how the movies became a monster

Terminated?

LAST year, 40 leading film-makers from around the world contributed to a portmanteau film called Lumière Et Comptemps. In celebration of cinema's centenary, each was commissioned to make a film using a reconstruction of the Lumière brothers' prototype movie camera, the Cinématographe. Each film had to be shot in a single take lasting roughly 50 seconds, the time it took to hand-crank the Lumière's original film strips, also recreated for the purpose. The film-makers — including David Lynch, James Ivory, Zhang Yimou and Spike Lee — rose to the challenge in different ways, several produc-

ing pedestrian notions, but a few finding ingenious ways to celebrate the simplicity and silence that, 100 years after its conception, cinema has largely repressed. It's understandable that at the end of cinema's first century, film-makers should be tempted to return to its source and try to fathom, in retrospect, what cinema could possibly have meant when it was untrammelled by a century of social, commercial and theoretical impositions. There's a powerful anxiety behind this quest: on the cusp of the millennium, cinema is haunted by a terror of its own impending death by returning to the scene of its birth.

This obsession with fragments of history seems to be peculiarly European, while the American film imagination largely seems intent on repressing the past altogether. We tend to think of Hollywood as being fixated on the past, in its tendency to thrive on sequels and remakes. But Hollywood in the late 1990s is addicted to the future, to technologies of novelty. The development of digital effects — the art of the impossible, impossible images — has fuelled the return to prominence of science fiction: of previously unrealisable films such as Independence Day, or the latest in the Star Wars series. Many of the new digital

epics, however, are not just about the future, but about the end of something: apocalypses in its various guises. In Independence Day, the Earth is ravaged by alien, then repleated to flourish again; doomsday is eclipsed by a rebirth for the next millennium. In the current wave of disaster-related films — Jurassic Park, Waterworld, Twister, two forthcoming volcano films — apocalypse is induced by a New Age subset of natural renewal and cosmic life cycles. These films enact the fantasy of conjuring up doomsday yet controlling it (the whirring in Twister is the ultimate controllable force: a hurricane that is entirely pilot-generated). In these fantasies of a millennial tabula rasa, Hollywood is invoking the end of its 20th century and trying to take symbolic control of its century to come.

Yet, in presenting these spectacular futures, cinema is very much in thrall to a nostalgia that has afflicted it from its very start. The medium constantly strives to recapture that shock of the real, that primal moment enshrined in myth, when the Lumière first terrified and delighted roomfuls of unwary viewers with the hair-raising vision of the train arriving at La Ciotat station.

A century on, film-makers are obliged to find ever more elaborate ways to bolster the effect of reality. The need to make images increasingly vivid and extraordinary has led to a process of constant inflation in the technology of wonder. Digitals; the IMAX format, 10 times the size of the standard 35mm frame; Showscan projection at 60 frames per second, bypassing the eye's ability to discern projected frames from reality — all these are moving us towards a cinema of total immersion.

The result may not be what we traditionally think of as cinema at all. It's always been a central part of the cinematic process that the viewer is not simply fooled or over-convinced, but persuaded — that we contribute to the creation of the mirage by maintaining some critical distance towards what we see. But the new technology aspires to bypass the critical faculty entirely to create a seamless image that can't be unpeeled by the eye. Critical orthodoxy regards miracles Hollywood cinema as a smart, ironic interweaving of codes that appeal to the culturally hyper-conscious viewer; and yet on the level of visual perception there is the danger of becoming the most passive audience yet.

It's hard to do anything but marvel passively at the alphas and wonders emerging from the digital utopia. Since the radical innovations of Terminator 2 (1991) and Jurassic Park (1993), Hollywood has been driven by a Promethean drive to create its own life forms, to challenge the old natural bonds of possibility. The old Hollywood caveat "it can't be done" need never apply again. Digitals can melt and mobilise the human form (Terminator 2), or mutilate it (Death Becomes Her, Tim Burton's forthcoming Mars Attacks!); it can create monsters (Jurassic Park, The Abyss) or even, we're promised, human life. James Cameron's Avatar aspires to be the first film with a cast of entirely digitally-generated stars.

Soon, digitals may raise the dead: the long-promised screen resurrection of Marilyn Monroe and Humphrey Bogart is said to be closer than expected. In the meantime, rather more abstractly, the film Dragonheart has caught the "essence" of Sean Connery using motion capture techniques to record his facial expressions and programme them into the features of a digital dragon. It's the first

instance of an electronic attempt to quantify an actor's "soul", which suddenly looks less infeasible than we once thought. The meteoric rise of the new digital artillery — which even five years ago, Hollywood regarded as marginal — is radically changing the face of mainstream cinema. With the number of specialist personnel and amount of equipment required to make an effects movie, the director is no longer the all-powerful dictator-visionary who once flourished under the auteur model of film-making, but something like a glorified project manager coordinating a huge corporate research initiative. And, as the film industry pumps more resources into training digital specialists, the openings for non-effects-led cinema may by necessity become limited.

If independent low-budget American film-making is so energetic, that's partly because it recognises itself as an endangered species. Large-scale film-making is likely to be an increasingly exclusive field, as much ruled by technological control as it was in the heyday of the Hollywood studio system. National cinemas are certain to lose out in the struggle, if they do not have the resources necessary to make a film meet the international visual standards that digital technology imposes.

But digitals also entail thornier questions of the way cinema shows us the world, or conjures up a simulacrum of it. It has always been perilously naive to look to film for a faithful record of the world, but the old arguments about reality and deception have taken a complex new turn as the very material of the screen image has changed. Digitals make the image simply a plastic mass of manipulable pixels.

The more spectacular digital images are transparently hallucinations, but more problematic is the discreet doctoring of reality in a film such as Forrest Gump, in which Gary Sinise's legs are digitally amputated in surreptitious hyper-real fashion. Realist Hollywood cinema now routinely has recourse to invisible erasing of unwelcome elements — safety wires, TV aerials in costume dramas, the wrong face in a crowd.

But beyond making realism suspect, there's a more intangible form of reality loss: the loss of that indefinable reality of things that you could best call "presence" or "aura". Digitally created objects can look perfectly real, indeed, excessively so. They are hyper-factual because every aspect of their appearance — their weight, their texture, the way they reflect light — is programmed, predetermined, leaving nothing to chance. They lack that element of accident, of peculiarity, that has always given

make a comeback). We can expect a demand for low-budget vérité drama set in real places, and perhaps a major documentary boom. There may be a fetishistic demand for the more extreme sorts of vérité spectacle — real sex, real death — and films will be prefaced by the guarantee that no factory took the Lumière assurance "No synthesizers used". But perhaps the desire for reality will result in the emergence of a different, subtler sort of reality — the sort of intangible reality of people, places, objects that we associate with the humanist cinema tradition. The Cannes triumph of Secrets And Lies this year suggests a vote for the reality that attaches to people's faces, actions, environments in a film — for the sort of intensely crafted, intensely lived experience that demands the viewer's emotional and imaginative participation, and that Hollywood has entirely sidelined.

But, taking things further, we can imagine films that explore a different realism, that use an effect of heightened everydayness and even banality to hint at something else. Paul Schrader once identified the visually austere films of Robert Bresson, Carl Theodor Dreyer and Yasujiro Ozu as exemplars of "transcendental style".

If there's a transcendental stylist at work today it's Denmark's Lars Von Trier, whose Breaking The Waves shows us little that's visually spectacular, but who uses a particular sort of energy in his camerawork, and an unusual depth of intimacy in acting style to produce something that's emotionally involving, hard to quantify, morally unsettling, and that hints at a religious dimension, if you care to respond to it. You could call it spiritual realism.

VON TRIER'S is just one possible approach to a crisis of the cinema image. Most contemporary film-making regards the picture on screen as a purely instrumental mechanism for dispensing pleasurable stimuli. Somehow the image's texture and weight have been impoverished; it's as if the image itself, with all its potential richness, were a messy, embarrassing surplus to be discarded as soon as possible. Mystically suspect though Von Trier's attitude that cinema is "an art unlike any other; quintessentially modern; distinctively accessible; poetic and mysterious and erotic and moral — all at the same time." The words are Susan Sontag's in "The Guardian" earlier this year, lamenting not only what she saw as the "ignominious, irreversible decline" of cinema, but also the end of cinephilia, a particular regard for film as something that's as big as life.

If we want cinema to maintain that big-as-life quality, we have to hope that independent film-making survives — independent in the sense of out there, disident, argumentative. We have to place faith in auteurs, in film-makers with a passion not only for subjects but also for the textures and rhythms of the image, and above all with a desire to transform them, violently if necessary. We should be looking to people like (to name a few) Atom Egoyan, Julio Medem, Wong Kar-wai, Jane Campion, Todd Haynes, the Quayes, Mouchida Tiafi, Rosa Troche. But the future shouldn't entail a simplistic art-house/Hollywood divide — we should be getting equally excited about developments yet to come from corporate names: Industrial Light and Magic, Pixar, Digital Domain, the IMAX Systems Corporation, Dreamworks.

The cinephilia of the future may not be the one we know — it may be home-centred and electronic. We may be seeing the last of the old "church" model — a congregation sitting in the dark watching the reflection of light through celluloid. Cinema's survival at the end of the millennium is a hot topic of debate because it's twice as exciting to be able to lament and elaborate in the same breath. The important thing is not to be falsely ingenuous. It's not a question of filming with innocent eyes, as Wim Wenders proposes — right now, film-makers need eyes that are sceptical, or angry, or mischievous, or mendacious, or sentimental, but steely above all, and focused on the courage to invent.



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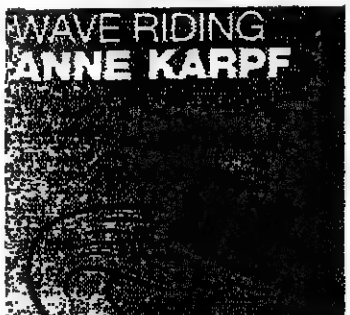
MEGASTORES

صوتنا من الامم



Life and Soul

Starky And Hutch (Bravo) Our boys went undercover as hotel dressers, Mr Tyrone and Mr Marlene. This proved very confusing. I always thought they were hairdressers, thanks to the too-carefully blow-dried hair and the absence of split ends. Who but a unisex hairdresser would wear a belted cardigan? Who but the LAPD would employ these guys as law enforcers? Hutch wore an ill-fitting wig, Starky sported a French accent that had escaped from a Ferraro Rocher ad. "With his accent, Mr Marlene, I will woo ze ladies." "Eccelente!" The accent with which, no doubt, Paul Michael Glaser used as a really irritating party turn. David Soul played Mr Marlene with effete lips and temperamental head twitches — the straight man's burdensome notion of gayness. As if they were threatened by this gay stereotyping, both men went into heterosexual overdrive: Hutch gave the obliging wife in room 1232 more than a shampoo and set; Starky had a string of blondes hanging on his new-found Gallic charms. Their job? To thwart the master jewel thief known only as the Baron, who was coming to their LA hotel to steal some diamonds. "Who is this Baron? What's he look like?" asked Starky. "No one knows. No pictures, no prints and no name. Nothing," said Bernie Hamilton's long-suffering Captain, top button undone, already sweating profusely into his shirt 10 minutes in, but otherwise with little to do except be that Finlay, a desk-bound black cop with at most three speeches per hour. All that was known of the Baron from the Scotland Yard report was that he smoked Corona Superba cigars. Ah, premises, premises. In the seventies you could get away with this stuff: the show ended with Starky and Hutch seated under blow-driers sucking on a pair of Corona Superbas, presents from the Baron. "Until the rematch, gentlemen," said the note.



Dame Edna, RIP

FUNERAL took place on Radio 2 last week: the last vestiges of Dame Edna Everage's wit were laid to rest. The corpse was a skeletal thing — s/he'd no wit left to speak of for a long time now. But for those of us who can recall weeping over Barry Humphries's creation almost two decades back, listening to Dame Edna's *Aural Experience* (Radio 2) was a doleful experience: the great parodist had pupated into those he'd once parodied. You knew it was going to be had when the Intro was delivered by David Jacobs, with the sort of I'm-in-on-the-joke mock theatricality which was to beset most of the show's guests. Certainly spoof chat shows present celebrities with a problem: do they play the sincere and treat them as just another platform for the self-promotion circuit, ignoring the fact that their host's whole persona is a comic ruse? Or, to avoid appearing like a self-absorbed tosser, are they prepared to inflate and distort their carefully-constructed image to match the postmodern dilemmas, and hitherto there was no solution: if you tried to take on Dame Edna she'd surely outwit you, and you'd end by looking an even bigger tosser. But the guests on last week's Dame Edna Christmas show, set on a tropical island, soon cottoned on to a new game: they were all playing in the same. This Dame Edna, and the jokes so feeble they belonged in a cracker. It's not that Edna Henley, Shirley Bassey, Joanna Lumley et al should have been

What would happen if Doctor Finlay and Doctor Cameron swapped jobs with Starky and Hutch? Both, after all, are stock double-acts with all the mutual fondness and occasional irrationality that implies. How would Finlay handle the casual sex and jive-talking with Huggy Bear? How would Starky deal with Janet's Hogmanay clooty dumpling? But the difficulty of imagining the swap is not just because of cultural differences; it is because of the unbridgeable gap between genres. There is little scope for mavericks in medical dramas; what the public demands from its TV doctors is consummate professionalism, perhaps a disastrous personal life that provides a counterpoint, but a steady hand on the stethoscope, and a bedside manner that involves keeping both feet on the floor. TV detectives have more fun: they are often encouraged to be bed hoppers, to drink too much, to detest authority, abandon paperwork and dress up as swingers to nail the bad guys. Doctor Finlay (ITV) was the single most to Starky and Hutch's umbrella-filled cocktail, pouring out a seasonal draught of snowbound drama. It was a snug chamber piece, a foursome trapped indoors with nothing but whisky, roaring

What would happen if Dr Cameron and Dr Finlay swapped jobs with Starky and Hutch?

fires and flickering desire to keep them from madness and board games; the same conceit that some TV programmes somewhere plays reassuringly each year. Finlay was romantically dallying with delectable Dr Napier; Cameron had a small heart attack and recalled his fondness for Janet; Janet wore a well-etched pinhead defiantly throughout the festivities. I've always had a bit of a thing for David Rentoul. Sexier as Darcy than Colin Firth, even now as Finlay he drops his jaw at the end of clauses like Gordon Brown. With Rentoul that's alluring, with the Shadow Chancellor scary. Doctor Finlay had a more line in sexual coyness. After the implausible Boy's Own moral censure of Starky and Hutch, the restraint of Tamochbrae was oddly touching. Finlay offered Dr Napier his bed, and waited for her reaction, before adding that, of course, would take the sofa. "No offence," replied Dr Napier. "I'd feel strange penetrating the bachelor fastness of Arden House in quite so blatant a manner." Did someone say "penetrating"? Janet — cover your ears!

abused in the name of comedy, but this was lazy, barb-free, feelgood humour which the guests could comfortably play along with since it sanctioned more or less the same quantities of minor panto. In his traditional chat-show, to the extent of allowing Jeffrey Archer to chum up to the Dame and, yes, archly talk about his royal succession bill in Ednaese. Ugh. Though Humphries dropped his "possessive" stuff, he still used "spooky" whenever he couldn't think of anything amusing to say, which was often. Fantasy and brutal honesty had evanesced, replaced by a Woolworth's camp, no longer comic and comments away from real camp. As a joke on fame and vanity, Dame Edna was long ago supplanted by Alan Partridge, and Steve Coogan knew better than to let him return each year like the Christmas panto. In his early theatre performances, Humphries achieved a superb poignant tone as a ghost. This might have been developed into something remarkable, had he strangled the constricting Dame a good six years ago; instead Humphries has allowed her turn into Danny La Rue. Spooky. Radio 5 Live served up a right slice of baldness on Wednesday morning, when *The Magazine* discussed "evolutionary psychology". The occasion was the publication of a new Demos report which, at least in the version proffered here, purported to explain everything — from why so many step-parents abuse their stepchildren to why most of us are going to pig out over Christmas — by recourse to Darwinian explanations. Journalists adore finding biological theories to explain stereotypes and confirm prejudices (after the criminal gene and the gay gene, are we to have a step-parent gene and a Christmas pudding one?), but this was media science at its shoddiest. Against a background of the kind of music better suited to a beachwear fashion show, there came an absurd succession of "studies show" and "according to research" snippets. In the discussion which followed, only Paul Barker sounded the necessary note of scepticism, while presenter Diana Madill, so competent over issues like Dunblane, seemed completely out of her depth and didn't steer the discussion, but kept returning it to unexamined truisms like free will. On this hearing, evolutionary psychology appeared to be a close relative that other great branch of psychology — pop-

Marry, be damned

What have The Merry Wives Of Windsor and Ibsen's Little Eyolf got in common? Not a lot, thought Michael Billington, until he saw the RSC's two latest productions

The revelation

ESEN and Shakespeare: unquestionably the greatest of all dramatists. And the RSC fortuitously links them with a double Stratford opening of *Little Eyolf* at The Swan and *The Merry Wives Of Windsor* at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre: two plays dealing, from wildly differing perspectives, with marriage, jealousy and guilt. *Little Eyolf*, written late in Ibsen's life in 1894, is a particularly tough nut: one that Adrian Noble's mastery production cracks with great aplomb. What he grasps is that this sombre, brooding play is essentially about the painful process of resurrection: that only by facing the darkest, bitterest truths about ourselves can we hope to achieve spiritual renewal. As in *Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf*, a child — in this case indisputably real — is the means of exposing marital guilt. The impatient idealist, Alfred Almers, and the fiercely sensual Rita have never recovered from the fact that their son was crippled through their own negligence: as a baby, he fell off a table while they were making love. And when, later, the nine-year-old *Eyolf* is lured into the sea by the Rat Wife and drowns, Alfred and Rita are forced into a process of almost Strindbergian soul-stripping. Alfred confronts his passion for his presumed half-sister, Asta; Rita her own devouring jealousy. Both also acknowledge that, for all their protestations, "We never really loved *Eyolf*." That line is greeted in Noble's production by a ruefully ironic laugh from Joanne Pearce's Rita and Robert Glenister's Alfred. It becomes the pivotal moment in the production suggesting the self-examination that leads ultimately to "nuptial renewal." "Know thyself!" said the ancients, and Ibsen's point is that only after one has dissected one's own life-lies can one hope to change either oneself or the world. It is a play about learning, and, since it is the heroine who finally proposes to open up the house to the village's impoverished children, it could even be retitled *Educating Rita*.

Noble, whose earlier productions of *A Doll's House* and *The Master Builder* revealed an extraordinary understanding of Ibsen, also gets the point here: that the play is dominated by what Ibsen calls "the law of change". Joanne Pearce's superb Rita moves from a tigerish sexual jealousy through a frantic death-wish towards a form of spiritual rebirth: she is unforgettable in the last act as, with a ghostly pallor, she removes a sea-sick morsel from her capacious overcoat pockets as if she planned to mimic her son's watery death before deciding to accept the role of surrogate village mother. Robert Glenister also registers Alfred's transition from self-deceiving idealist to earthbound realist with nifty intensity. And there is impeccable support from Derbille Croxall as the angst-ridden Asta and from Damian Lewis as the practical engineer who offers her the only hope of rational escape. Rob Howell's set, with a fault-line symbolically running through the floor, also suffers internal erosion with each act, as if the characters are reduced to living on the edge of a precipice; which in this veriginous masterpiece they virtually are. After the shattering emotional intensity of the tormented souls of *Windsor*, *The Merry Wives Of Windsor* seems quite relaxing. But Ian Judge, as if to belie his reputation as the RSC's Dr Pangloss, comes up an autumnal, ruse-hatched production in which the fun is somewhat fitful. Indeed, he even gives an Ibsenite twist to the climax of the scene where the maniacally jealous Ford ransacks his house in search of his wife's assumed lover. As Edward Petherbridge's crestfallen, obsessive Ford urges his wife to go and make dinner, Susannah York's hitherto sunny bright-eyed Alice stalks off for all the world as if she is about the slam the door like Nora in *A Doll's House*. It's so startling a moment that one wishes the idea of a marriage founded on suspicion and mistrust had been allowed to shadow the rest of the comedy. The chief problem with this production is Leslie Phillips's seedy, saloon-bar lecher of a Falstaff. He lacks weight, which undercuts the whole joke of his being bundled into a buck-basket: even more sig-



Guilt edged... Joanne Pearce and Robert Glenister in Little Eyolf

nificantly he lacks any aura of depleted aristocracy so that his final exclusion from this smug, middle-class Eden goes for little. But there is a priceless supporting performance from Guy Henry as Dr Caius which goes beyond the

Garth Cartwright on 'the world's second best band', No Way Sis

Zombie karaoke

The clones

THE Oasis phenomenon keeps rolling: on Thursday you could hear Wonderwall playing Oasis songs live in Greater London Radio's morning session then head to the Empire in the evening to see No Way Sis do their take on the Manchester superstars. At your local pub there may have been Noasis, Quoasis or Oasisis doing a similar turn. If ever there is to be a reissue of *The Invasion Of The Body Snatchers*, it could centre on groups of lank-haired, lantern-jawed young men suddenly sighted on stages throughout the country. No Way Sis, only a year old, have reached a level of popularity that sees them managing to headline the *Empire* two nights running and secure a five-album contract with EMI. It is a first for any tribute band. With Noel and Liam's stamp of approval, the brothers Gallagher having called them "the second-best band in the world", the Sis collective must feel blessed. Live, the Glaswegian band make a passable Oasis, with the audience relishing note-perfect readings of *Supersonic* and *Hello, Joe*. McKay captures Noel's chunky guitar flavour while his brother, Jerry, does a fine turn as Liam. Yet there is no real spark, and their absolute mimicry of Oasis's sullen stage presence suggests a karaoke crew. A plodding Live Forever demonstrates a marked lack of dynamics. Playing no original material they encored with their debut single, I'd Like To Teach The World To Sing. The joke is that The New Seekers sued Oasis for stealing the melody from their anaemic anthem. Unfortunately that is as funny as the Sis get. Where the Abba tribute band Bjorn Again possess a celebratory sense of camp, No Way Sis are an irony-free zone. The wannabes fail to observe how derivative and dumb Oasis often are. Watching them is to be a witness to rock music at its most anally absurd. The audience and the band are both aware that this is at once homage and pantomime, but No Way Sis fail to play it for laughs. Yes, they look like Oasis and sound like Oasis but No Way Sis are finally, The Rutles without the punch-line. So why does Noel Gallagher continue to push the Sis? I imagine that, with Oasis only playing occasional stadium gigs, the rut bandit enjoys knowing his songs are being thrashed out every night. Bigger than The Beatles and damn near impossible to escape, Oasis have set the pod people among us.



Bruce Sansom and Miyako Yoshida as the Prince and Cinderella

Fairy entertaining

Judith Mackrell has a ball at the Royal Ballet's production of Cinderella

The treat

THE really charming thing about Frederick Ashton's *Cinderella* is that everyone gets to the ball — the Fairy Godmother and her attendants, the jester, the hairdresser, the Prince's friends and even the Ugly Sisters are all given steps of surprisingly equal beauty and wit. In fact the 1948 ballet, choreographed to Frodo's classic score, is a perfect company show case — depending not only on pol-

ished solos but on a kind of comic democracy where everyone onstage has to connect with everyone else. During the funny scenes, the jokes are lobbed around the entire cast and the romance of the lovers' final embrace is clinched by the expression of wonder on the onlookers' faces, and by the silent howls of anguish from the Ugly Sisters. The work is British ballet at its best — at least to those of us brought up on pantomime and theatrical realism. And in Wednesday night's performance it was also

British dancing at its peak. At its centre was Miyako Yoshida, making her debut as Cinderella. During the first act, her natural modesty combined with everyone else's bustle kept her slightly in the background. But in Act II her dancing powered into brilliance and grandeur. Picking her way through Ashton's footwork with catlike delicacy and speed, she showed you every sharp accent and every graceful curve with wonderful clarity. Bruce Sansom, always an elegant Prince, partnered her handsomely

The powers that be are no longer content with power alone, says Vera Rule

Vanity, vanity, all is vanity

Provocations

NICE little cameo, the part of Ruthven the Highland Vampire, in a late Georgian melodrama shown in Christopher Freyling's biting history of Count Dracula on BBC1 this week. And who was under Ruthven's period slap? Not a thespian, but the second earl of Gowrie — current chairman of the Arts Council. Have you noticed how many entertainment executives now want to perform? It's as if the reason for having power over the camera is so that you can locate yourself in front of it. We're not complaining if an executor succumbs to exhibitionism. We accept it's convenient to charm an assistant director into a mini-role as a weirdo when the cast-



John Birt in a rare on-screen appearance

ing director can't fill it before shooting starts Tuesday. But that doesn't excuse Alan Yentob, BBC director of programmes, from casting himself as interviewer in BBC2's David

the audience had to listen to all these words spoken by nobodies — professional actors who got to love, die and be admired for four hours. The maximum visibility the audience could achieve, by contrast, was to sit by the stage, flammign their clothes and persons. Enter the masque. Plot: vestigial. Lines: irrelevant — you could hire real actors, singers and musicians for the real work, like learning or God, rehearsing. Sets and spectacle: extremely expensive. Costumes: splendid. That was the point. Everyone could wear wigs and show off their legs, pretend to the excitement of show-biz. Why sponsor a dreary group of actor men, when you, or someone you fancied, could wait down on a cloud displaying a bare boom? The masque did for the English drama for 60 years: out with King Lear (no guest spot dance-ones), in with Samuel Daniel's *Tethys Festival*. Total trash, of course. Not a word worth remembering. But no doubt — like Lord Gowrie — everybody looked great in the photos...

Rugby Union

Ian Malin on the Irish outsiders hoping to clean up in the fifth round's only all-first division clash in the Pilkington Cup today

Bath time for Anderson's Exiles

WILLIE Anderson took his London Irish side to Bath yesterday afternoon, a trip that looked as facile as going Christmas shopping with an expired Barclaycard.

No disrespect to the Exiles, and the Recreation Ground is not quite the citadel it was, but Bath have not been beaten in the Pilkington Cup there for six years, since Dean Richards in his memorable phrase, "burrowed in the mud like a mole" all afternoon and Leicester beat the then holders 12-0.

The only all-first division tie of this weekend's fifth round may be paid on the equivalent of starting down the barrel of a gun for the Irish but Anderson, one-time Ireland lock and captain, is used to meeting challenges head-on.

Something of a character in his playing days, Anderson once gained notoriety when he marched his Ireland side up to the noses of Wayne Sheffield's All Blacks while they were performing their ritual haka before a game at Lansdowne Road.

"Yes, of course it'll be difficult. Bath have excellent players in every position, the game's on their own ground and there'll be 10,000 screaming people there. But there's no reason why we can't win."

A month ago Anderson left Ulster, where he had been director of rugby at Dungannon, to join London Irish in the same capacity. He signed a two-year contract, agreeing over the reins from the former England centre Clive Woodward, whose last month at Sunbury were torrid to say the least.

Woodward resigned during the summer in a committee-room row over his lack of Irish ancestry. He was persuaded to stay on but found coaching a newly professionalised club and holding down a job incompatible and after introducing Anderson to the Exiles he left for good.

Meanwhile the Exiles have been losing league matches at an alarming rate. On the second weekend of the season they beat Northampton, alongside whom they had been promoted to League One in the summer, with no little verve and passion at Sun-



In the hot seat... Willie Anderson sets out for Bath yesterday for his first Pilkington Cup match as director of rugby at London Irish ANDY BLACKMORE

bury. But they have lost their other eight league games and are anchored alongside Orrell and West Hartlepool at the foot of a division from which three clubs at least will be relegated next spring.

The Exiles have imported some of the best forwards Ireland has to offer, Jeremy Davidson, Victor Costello and Gabriel Fulcher. But, like the national side, they have become good losers.

Anderson is determined to break this habit. "Since I came here I've discovered that everyone is determined to do what's necessary to turn things around. There is major potential here and there's no

reason why we can't get into a winning sequence. I'm spending 100 per cent of my time coaching at the moment but I want to get the development of players right. We want to keep the Irish ethos here. There will always be Irish players in England looking to play at a top club and it's my job to make sure they come here."

On the surface Anderson, who has been an assistant coach with Ireland and has made no secret of his desire to have his country's top job, would appear too laid-back to bustle a ruthless regime at Sunbury. After that game against the All Blacks in 1986,

which Ireland lost 33-8, the captain gave an after-dinner speech in which he said rugby union should be put in perspective. A friend of his had recently died in the Troubles. "I don't know how long a game of rugby."

"I still think that way. You have to keep work, family and friends in perspective. The job is important, you give it your all and you need a professional approach and a sense of balance."

And Anderson can be ruthless, as his opponents on the field discovered. The No. 8 Costello, dropped to the bench for this game, has also discovered this to his cost.

Fulcher will be missing from the second row today after injuring his wrist in Ireland's defeat by Australia last month. It is a body-blow for the Irish but there is a ray of hope. Bath cup winners 10 times in 13 seasons, have off-field problems of their own, with their coach Brian Ashton taking a week off to consider his future after an uneasy relationship with the club's director of rugby John Hall.

The former England flanker Andy Robinson, who has helped with the coaching duties this week in Ashton's absence, shrugs off their troubles. "We've always had internal arguments down here, especially when Jack Rowell was coach. But what we have learned to do is blank the off-field problems of their own, with their coach Brian Ashton taking a week off to consider his future after an uneasy relationship with the club's director of rugby John Hall."

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Whistle-stop action wipes out big games

David Plummer on the strike by referees which has left little to watch in Wales

IT IS normally the weather that brings the game in Wales to a halt in December but not one match will be played in the top five divisions today because the Welsh Society of Rugby Referees has gone on strike in an acrimonious dispute over pay.

Six rearranged Swalec Cup matches, involving clubs from the Second Division and below, are going ahead, together with a few minor league games. The Welsh Rugby Union, after contacting referees individually this week and telephoning other unions for help, called peace talks on Thursday night but, even though progress was made, it was too late for today's fixture list to be salvaged.

There are three central points of contention: the referees want to be paid on a sliding scale for taking charge of matches in the top division; they want the deal backdated to the start of the season; and they have refused to sign individual contracts.

The WRU initially refused all three demands, offering a deal for the top two divisions backdated to December 1 and insisted on contracts. The union backed down on the first two on Thursday night but refused to budge on contracts. An emergency meeting was held last night and a further one is planned for next week to prevent the strike affecting next Saturday's league programme.

"All this would have been averted had the WRU acted properly and professionally," said Hugh Benfield, secretary of the society. "But to call a meeting so late in the day, having refused to talk for the previous two weeks, was a terrible misjudgement. They have misread the situation totally and they are to blame for the lack of rugby this weekend."

"Quite why they offered such stiff resistance I cannot understand, because our package is only costing them £50,000. I do not know if they thought we would not carry out our threat or that we were not united in our stand but they have learned a hard lesson, even if they saw the light too late."

Benfield welcomed the Union's climbdown over the issues but said his society could not budge over contracts. "We will not sign many of our members cannot because of their jobs. What other sport contracts its referees?"

It is the clubs in Wales which are counting the cost rather than the WRU. "This strike is a disaster," said the Llanelly chairman Stuart Galacher, who made desperate attempts to fulfil his club's home fixture against Bridgend today. "We arranged for a lower grade referee to control the match but Bridgend objected because he had never taken control of a First Division match and there would have been no neutral touchjudges."

The Bridgend chairman Derrick King sympathised. "If it were not such an important fixture with a bearing on the top four of the First Division and a place in the European Cup next season we would have obliged because we know Llanelly's financial position is not healthy. But what I cannot understand is why the WRU did not take steps to prevent this strike a long time ago."

"It is a continuous financial problem. A number rely on their bank managers to keep them afloat. That support is given on the basis of projected cash flow. Some games are an important part of that."

The top match of the day was to be the visit of the First Division leaders Swansea to Cardiff but pride of place now goes to the all-second Division cup tie between Cardiff Institute and Aberdarely. "We will now lose some £25,000," said the Cardiff chief executive Gareth Davies.

Twickenham digs deep to give clubs a £40,000 Christmas bonus

TWICKENHAM is playing Santa Claus by giving all 24 First and Second Division clubs a £40,000 Christmas bonus to help the clubs settle their wage bills.

The payments, which will cost the Rugby Football Union £960,000, are being made despite the delay in

English Professional Rugby Union Clubs, which represents the 24, signing an agreement with the RFU that was negotiated on December 8. An early condition of the clubs starting to receive their promised £2 million this season was that a deal should be formally signed.

Clubs now owned by multi-millionaires such as Newcastle and Richmond have been able to pay some huge salaries for their professional players. But the clubs without benefactors have been reluctantly dragged into paying sizeable salaries before Twickenham has helped pay bills.

Members at Coventry have rejected a takeover bid from the city's soccer club. They voted instead, by a large majority, to explore the best possible deal with the property group Leander which wants a controlling interest at Countess Road in return for buying a million £1 shares.

Weekend fixtures

Table of weekend fixtures for various leagues including National League, Premier Division, and others. Lists teams and match times.

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Lingfield

Table of Lingfield fixtures: 12.30 Northampton v Exiles, 1.00 Exiles v Bath, 1.00 Bath v Exiles, 1.00 Exiles v Bath.

Uttoxeter

Table of Uttoxeter fixtures: 12.30 Northampton v Exiles, 1.00 Exiles v Bath, 1.00 Bath v Exiles, 1.00 Exiles v Bath.

1.00 FOOT & HATTON INVOICE HANDBOOK CRASHES

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1.35 RAILWAY FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP HANDBOOK CRASHES

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2.10 ANGLIAN INSURANCE SERVICES JOVIAL HANDBOOK CRASHES

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2.40 NEW SERVICE HANDBOOK CRASHES

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3.10 MAC VEE SERVICE HANDBOOK CRASHES

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Large advertisement for 'Majo' featuring a large image of a man's face and promotional text.

stle-stop on wipes big game

Racing

Ron Cox predicts victory for Borders raider in the Betterware Cup Handicap Chase at Ascot

Major looks all set to ring the bell

MORE than a few years have passed since Ken Oliver, the veteran Hawick trainer, plundered a whole string of jump racing's big prizes with classy chasers like Fighting Pit.

But there is a revival in the Borders area and at the forefront is Major Bell, who travels south to Ascot today in a leading chance in the Betterware Cup Handicap Chase.

Trained by Alistair Whillans near Hawick, Major Bell lost his unbeaten record over fences when he journeyed to Ascot last month. But it required the considerable talents of the well-handicapped Strong Promise to deny the Scottish raider, who maintained his improved form with a battling four lengths second.

That race, the First National Bank Gold Cup, was over two miles and three furlongs and Major Bell will appreciate the step up to three miles today. His showed useful form over hurdles at the longer trip, notably when running What A Question to a length at Aintree last year.

Major Bell reeled off five wins over fences — albeit including a lucky success at Chepstow — and would have been a five lengths winner here last time with Strong Promise out of the way.

Brian Harding, his regular jockey, is injured but Major Bell will get every assistance from the saddle with Norman Williamson deputising, and if the ground remains on the fast side that will be no problem.

Under a vintage ride from Richard Dunwoody in this race last year, Unguided Missile was rallied to beat Rough Quest a neck. He is 10lb higher in the ratings now, but a smooth win at Haydock on his reappearance suggests that is warranted.



Cup target... Unguided Missile (left), winning at Haydock last month, bids to follow up at Ascot today

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARTIN LYNCH

The versatile Inchalloch, winner of the Cesarewitch and better than ever over fences, was ridden by Dunwoody to a three and a half lengths victory over Go Ballistic at Ascot in November and followed up in a little race at Sandown last week.

He could still be well handicapped, but on 10lb better terms Go Ballistic is preferred this time, particularly as he would have finished closer to Inchalloch but for a mistake two out.

Go Ballistic has a good record at Ascot and, with Tony McCoy riding, the seven-year-old should go well off 10st.

Mick Fitzgerald, who gets on well with Go Ballistic, is required to ride Travado but the top weight seems to face a tough task over a trip which may stretch his stamina.

Although Dextra Dove will be better for his run in the Hennessy, he is likely to find one of the up-and-coming types too strong for him, notably Major Bell (2.50).

On a good supporting card, it is a good supporting card, Norman Williamson can make a double when he teams up with Pleasure Shared (1.45) in the Long Walk Hurdle.

An early faller over fences at Lingfield last Saturday, Pleasure Shared was barely out of the novice stage when he accounted for Seekin Cash in the Letheby & Christopher Long Distance Hurdle at Ascot in April. A repeat of that form would probably be good enough today.

Excuses were made for Training after his lack-lustre display behind What A Question at Newbury.

He had readily beaten the Irish mare at Wetherby, and is likely to do so again, but if this were a handicap he would be getting 16lb from Pleasure Shared.

A 7lb penalty may not be enough to anchor Make A Stand (1.10) in the Mitis Group Kennel Gate Novice Hurdle, although there are one or two "dark horses" here who could test Martin Pipe's front-runner, Perfect Pal, in particular, is one to note.

It will be interesting to see how one-time top class hurdler Oh So Risky fares against stronger opposition on his second start, over fences, in the "Book of Music" Novice Chase.

Or Royal, Martin Pipe's expensive French purchase, could be top class but might need soft ground and it can't get to stick with Simply Gooding (2.35), who is the lucky not to be unseated this season.

Moorcroft Boy heads Welsh National weights

Ken Oliver

BELMONT KING has been cut to 7-3 from 4-1 by the sponsors for next Friday's Corral Welsh National at Chepstow.

Paul Nicholls's gelding put up a tremendous performance on the Welsh course earlier this month when, returning after an absence of 590 days, he ran out an impressive winner of the Rehearsal Chase.

There were 30 left in at yesterday's declaration with the original five top weights defecting, leaving Moorcroft Boy, last season's Scottish National winner, heading the list with 11st 7lb.

The Tote make Kim Bailey's Fellow Countryman their market leader at 9-2, while Ladbrokes have Belmont King and Fellow Countryman joint favourites at 4-1.

Agistment, whose only start in his career was the pennantite fight.

However, Dunwoody

tried his mount for another effort and he gained the upper hand close home to score by half a length.

Jimmy Fitzgerald, the gelding's trainer, explained that Agistment gives few clues as to his abilities on the home gallops.

"He's the worst horse I have got at home and the best horse I have on the racecourse," said Fitzgerald. "If you want to sell something, you can work it with him, he's such a lazy horse — he's blowing his head off now."

March, was given a fine ride by Richard Dunwoody in the BEF Novice Hurdle at Uttoxeter yesterday.

Despite his impressive credentials, the five-year-old was sent off 5-2 second favourite with David Nicholson's Mighty Moss heading the market at 6-4 on.

Having been sent to the front by Dunwoody approaching the fourth from home, Agistment looked all set for a runaway but was headed by Mighty Moss at the penultimate fence.

However, Dunwoody

"He threw a splint before the Cheltenham Bumper and Richard said he blew up where the second last hurdle would be. But he's a fine, big horse, and today's runner-up is a very good horse."

Agistment's next run may be the Challow Hurdle at Newbury next Saturday.

Dunwoody had earlier been successful aboard Tornado Gold, who defeated Master Tribute by five lengths in the Stretch Bolters & Radistors Handicap Hurdle.

"White was penalised following a lengthy inquiry into his handling of the six-year-old Flying Eagle. He had been called to answer charges concerning the gelding's condition on leaving his yard last April and his alleged failure to inform the owner of a tendon injury the gelding suffered during a race at Kempton in October last year.

After considering statements from White who was legally represented, along with his vet, the Jockey Club committee found him to be in breach of rule 51.

White was judged not to have exercised reasonable care with regard to Flying Eagle while in his charge and was found not to be acting in the owner's interests by neglecting to inform him of the reason for resting the horse.

In view of the uncertain long-term weather forecast for next week, with widespread frost, a possibility of Lingfield will stage an all-weather Flat meeting on Boxing Day.

Bobby first win for Grant

CHRIS GRANT, former top northern jockey, saddled his first winner as a trainer when Bobby Grant landed the Levy Board Intermediate Flat Race at Hexham yesterday.

The Northumberland track was also the venue where Grant rode his first winner back in 1977.

Bobby Grant, named by owner John Thompson after his trainer, was sent off at 9-1 and beat Maggie Melody by two and a half lengths under Peter Niven.

Grant, who partnered 788 winners during his career in the saddle, said: "I always enjoyed riding round here but this has given me a good feeling as well."

"With a name like that I told Mr Thompson that the horse was handicapped before he started racing."

The 40-year-old, who took out his licence in 1980, has 10 horses in training at his establishment at Wolveston in Teesside.

Before training on his own account he assisted wife Sue at her point-to-point yard at her home up riding two and a half years ago.

It was not such a happy day for trainer John White who was fined £1,000 by the Jockey Club disciplinary committee for "failing to exercise reasonable care" with one of his horses.

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Ascot card with guide to the form

- 1.55** Stately Stealing
1.10 Make A Stand
1.45 Pleasure Shared
- 2.30** Top Spin
2.50 Inland
2.30 Mr Percy

- 12.15** Tappety
12.45 Out Couchoe
1.50 Blushing Edge
- 1.55** Stately Stealing
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1.45 Pleasure Shared

BBC-1

- 1.10** MYTH GROUP HURDLE (15) 11:00hrs £25,000
1.15-1.25 MAKE A STAND (14) (9) M Pipe 5-11-10
1.30 BALMORAL HURDLE (14) (9) M Pipe 5-11-10
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2.00-2.05 PLEASURE SHARED (14) (9) M Pipe 5-11-10
2.10-2.15 PLEASURE SHARED (14) (9) M Pipe 5-11-10
2.15-2.20 PLEASURE SHARED (14) (9) M Pipe 5-11-10
2.20-2.25 PLEASURE SHARED (14) (9) M Pipe 5-11-10
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2.35-2.40 PLEASURE SHARED (14) (9) M Pipe 5-11-10
2.40-2.45 PLEASURE SHARED (14) (9) M Pipe 5-11-10
2.45-2.50 PLEASURE SHARED (14) (9) M Pipe 5-11-10

Haydock runners and riders

- 12.15** Tappety
12.45 Out Couchoe
1.50 Blushing Edge
- 1.55** Stately Stealing
1.10 Make A Stand
1.45 Pleasure Shared

- 12.15** Tappety
12.45 Out Couchoe
1.50 Blushing Edge
- 1.55** Stately Stealing
1.10 Make A Stand
1.45 Pleasure Shared

Results

HEREFORD
1.55-1.58 STATIONER (14) (9) M Pipe 5-11-10
2.00-2.05 PLEASURE SHARED (14) (9) M Pipe 5-11-10
2.10-2.15 PLEASURE SHARED (14) (9) M Pipe 5-11-10
2.15-2.20 PLEASURE SHARED (14) (9) M Pipe 5-11-10
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Results

HEXHAM
1.55-1.58 STATIONER (14) (9) M Pipe 5-11-10
2.00-2.05 PLEASURE SHARED (14) (9) M Pipe 5-11-10
2.10-2.15 PLEASURE SHARED (14) (9) M Pipe 5-11-10
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2.45-2.50 PLEASURE SHARED (14) (9) M Pipe 5-11-10

RACELINE
0930 168+ COMMENTARY RESULTS
ASCOT 105 205
HAYDOCK 106 206
UTTOXETER 107 207
LINGFIELD 108 208
IRISH 109 209

Edward O'Grady, the Irish trainer, has declared Sound Man for next Friday's Castledare Chase at Wetherby as well as The King George VI Chase at Kempton on Boxing Day but may well miss both races. "At this stage I'd have to say that you won't be seeing Sound Man in either race," said O'Grady. "The entry for the Wetherby race was made a few days ago but we are not considering running him there at the moment but I will be having further talks with the owners." The trainer stressed that there was still a slight chance that his gelding could go to Kempton. "If something untoward was to happen to One Man then we might change our minds," he added.

Blinkered for the first time — LINGFIELD: 2.10 Half An Inch; 3.40 Bebe Grey; UTTOXETER: 12.35 Guttridge.

Soccer

Pearce takes charge as door opens for new Forest regime

Ian Ross

STUART PEARCE began the transformation from player to manager yesterday when, a day after Nottingham Forest had accepted the resignation of Frank Clark, he agreed to take charge of the Premier's bottom club in a caretaking capacity.

Pearce said he intends to review his position in mid-January, by which time Forest's protracted takeover battle will have been resolved. Yesterday the consortium led by the local businessman Sandy Anderson, the choice recommended by Forest's current board of directors, was given a clear run after the rival group, headed by the Monte Carlo businessman Lawrie Lewis, withdrew from the power struggle.

Pearce has made no secret of wanting to move into management at the end of his playing career but he is concerned that by taking on the role of player-manager he may jeopardise his international career.

"I am hoping that Glenn Hoddle is flexible, and I am sure that is the case. He is only concerned about how a player performs on a football pitch. But, if he felt that me being the manager of Nottingham Forest, with its full-time contract, then it is something I would have to address."

have preferred to take over a team at the top of the League with no problems on the pitch, but that is not the case. "The chairman (Irving Korn) rang me and asked if I would be prepared to take on the challenge until a new consortium is in place at the club. I have told him that, if I feel it is affecting my football, I will see him again and discuss my position."



Taking it on the chin... Pearce in Forest's hot seat. IAN ROSS

Korn revealed that Clark's final act as Forest's manager was typically generous — he recommended that Pearce should replace him. "It was Frank's idea to keep it in the family in terms of appointing Stuart; he felt he was ideal for the job," said Korn. "If he feels he can cope with all that is involved, then he is going to come and see me after Christmas and we will discuss a proper contract."

Nigel Clough, a former England international, is not expected to face Arsenal this afternoon. He left Forest for Liverpool in 1993 before joining Manchester City earlier this year. "I feel this is the best way forward for both parties," said City's caretaker manager Phil Neal. "The best was on the list at this club and this gives him a chance to resurrect his career."

Beechy ahead of the game

Soccer Diary

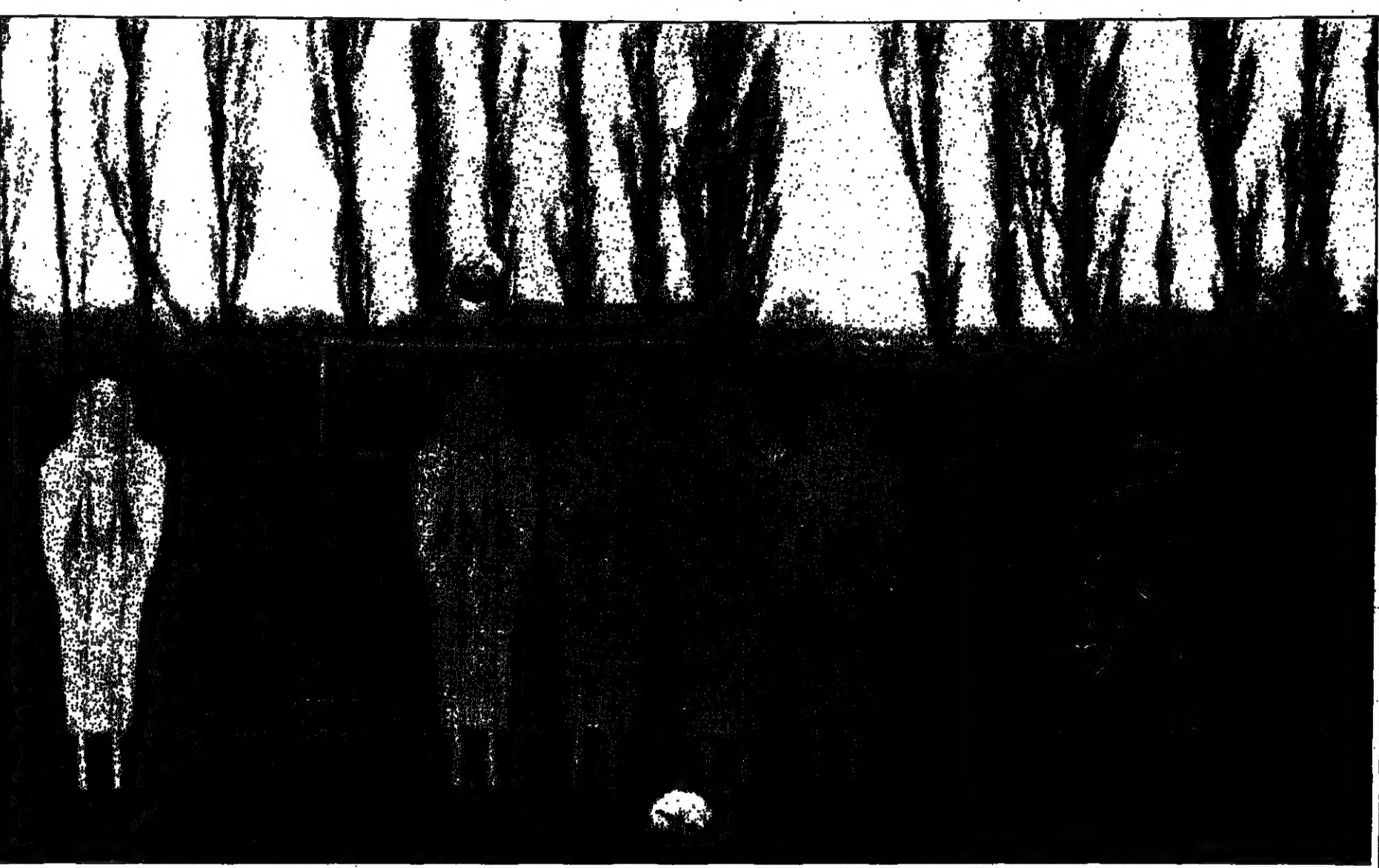
Neil Robinson

WHAT a result! Paul Gascoigne throws himself at the mercy of Beechy Colclough and now, eight weeks later, we have firm evidence that the shrink-wrapping has worked. Not only has Gazza given up beating Shezza, but he has become a presence on the field as well. Indeed October 26, when he received his fourth yellow card of the season, may go down as the last time anyone saw Gazza do anything bad.

David Lacey examines the Premiership's four-match holiday programme which could sort out the probables from the possibles among the title pretenders

The thrill of the race starts here

THERE is every prospect of a thrilling finish in the Premiership this season. The race will not be all over by Easter, let alone Christmas, but the next 12 days should begin to sort out probables from the possibles among the posse of pretenders.



Dummy run... Gianfranco Zola hones his dead-ball skills at Chelsea's London training ground in preparation for today's Premiership match with West Ham

There has not been a full Premiership programme for two weeks but the pre-Christmas lull has still produced some significant results. The Liverpool attack has savaged two of the lamer ducks, Middlesbrough and Nottingham Forest, and taken Roy Evans's team to the top for the first time since early October. Newcastle United, on the other hand, could only draw at Forest and Tuesday's 2-1 defeat by Coventry City, another struggling side, has left Kevin Keegan facing the prospect of losing touch over the four-match holiday period.

field Wednesday leave McManaman bound and gagged as they win 1-0 at Anfield. Manchester United appear to be heading for a 2-0 win at West Ham but the match ends at 2-2.

Alex Ferguson's preoccupation with the Champions League has helped keep the contest open. Then again, as the fifth midweek 1-1 draw at Hillsborough demonstrated, United have yet to produce much consistency this season and will be looking for a stronger continuity of performance during the hectic days ahead. The fixtures could not

have been better designed to help United pick up the scent of the championship. Tomorrow they are at home to Peter Reid's hard-working Sunderland. A Manchester United win, however, and the games against Forest and Leeds will hold out the prospect of a nine-point maximum before Villa visit Old Trafford on New Year's Day.

Aston Villa have to meet Wimbledon, Chelsea and Arsenal before then. Brian Little's team appear to have shaken off their autumn torpor with four successive league victories but only once

and Sheffield Wednesday away. Villa and Middlesbrough at home. Everton should enjoy it, too, with home matches against Leeds, Wimbledon and Blackburn and a visit to Teesside in between.

Middlesbrough are clearly cast in the role of yule logs this year, ripe for ritual burning while those around them make merry. What with Emerson's absenteeism and now the mixture of injuries and flu which have led to today's game with Blackburn being called off, it is hard to see Riverside enjoying much cheer.

Team sheet

Chelsea v West Ham Dan Petrescu, Mark Hughes and Roberto Di Matteo are an expected side for Chelsea but Gianluca Vialli is injured and Frank Leboeuf and Dennis Wise are both suspended. Scott Mills (dead leg) is a fresh doubt. West Ham will be without their striker John Hartley for the first time and will be out for 15 weeks. The team sheet from Liverpool City is likely to come straight into today's team.

Albion follow the trend by taking shares to market

WEST BROMWICH Albion yesterday confirmed plans for a listing on the Alternative Investment Market that will value the club at 27.5 million. Albion will not be raising new money from the flotation but the move allows existing shareholders — who invested 24.4 million in a separate share issue in April — to trade their shares more easily and makes it easier for supporters who are not existing investors to buy shares.

Newell calls the law on Sullivan

MIKE NEWELL, the Birmingham City striker who yesterday joined West Ham on a month's loan, has taken legal advice about criticism he received from the Birmingham chairman David Sullivan.

A N Other

F&W English footballers have equalled this honest, middlefielder for strength, staying power and the will to win. He was the piston that drove his home-town team to successive ways above their modest station on the old IFLER. Having been decorated in blue, he then underlined the achievement in red the following year. Later he took holy orders and dabbled in ceramics before resting in a may tree.

Scottish preview

FALKIRK dismiss Bannon for fielding ineligible player. AMONNY BANNON yesterday paid a heavy price for an administrative error when he lost his job as manager of Falkirk. The club's chairman George Finlayson took the decision as the First Division promotion-chasers faced up to a £25,000 fine by the Scottish League for fielding an ineligible player.

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Nottingham Forest v Arsenal

Nottingham Forest v Arsenal. Arsenal give their midfielder René Girard his first Premiership start in place of his fellow Frenchman Patrick Vieira. Dennis Bergkamp and Martin Keown also return.

1996-7 Season PREMIERSHIP FOOTBALL. Tickets available for various clubs. BOOK TICKETS NOW 0171 413 3355

Handwritten Arabic text: كسب من الاموال

Cricket

Zimbabwe v England: first Test, third day

Hussain tucks in to set up a vision of victory

David Hopps in Bulawayo

NASSER HUSSAIN'S third century since his Test comeback...

England resume today at 306 for four, only 70 runs in arrears...

England know the feeling, a succession of indifferent displays...

It had been no picnic. The pitch was slow, the fields semi-defensive...

This occasion the fear was that Paul Strang would emerge from it...

Stewart's dismissal was umpire-assisted. He tried to sweep a leg-spinner from Strang...

He had battled with great panache for a time but became England's only wicket to fall before lunch...

Scoreboard

Scoreboard table showing runs for England (306) and Zimbabwe (276) with player statistics.

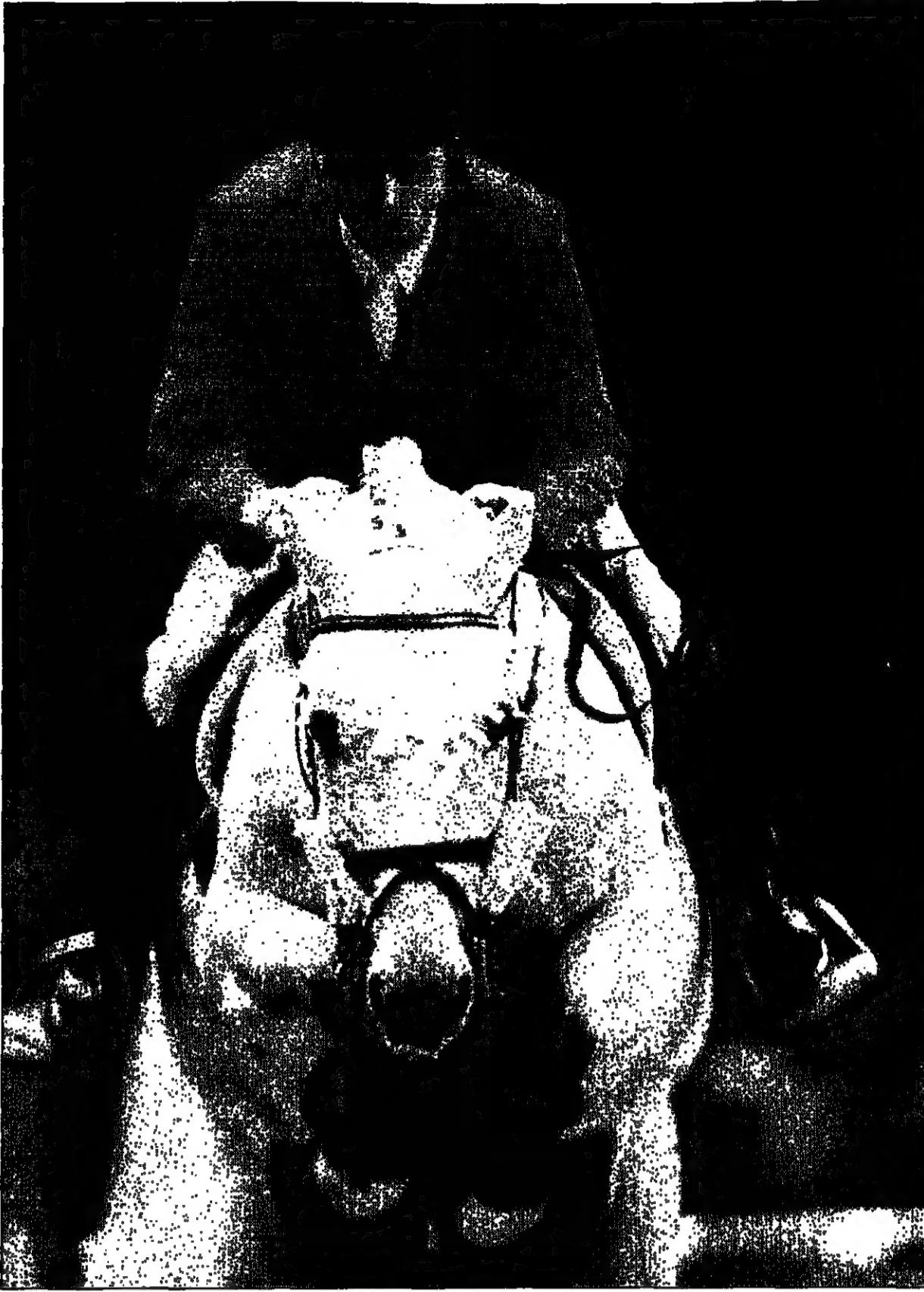
Constant struggle for breath in Strang's stranglehold

Paul Elliott considers the upward turn in fortunes of Zimbabwe's classy leg-spinner

THE MORNING was the sort more readily associated with Manchester than Bulawayo...

When the googly proves successful since the deception is complete...

England's exposure to three leading leg-spinners in Kumble, Mustaq and now Strang...



Dreaming of a grey Christmas... Carsten-Otto Nagel on Wisenerwibel of Germany rises to the challenge...

Third Olympia win for Whitaker

JOHN WHITAKER continued Britain's run of success at the Olympia Showjumping Championships...

John Kerr at Olympia... The major prize on the opening night and again favoured by the draw...

luge Grannusch, winners of the major prize on the opening night and again favoured by the draw...

Results

Basketball: Bucks 95, Milwaukee 83; Chicago 83, Charlotte 72; Utah 84, Miami 87...

Cricket

FOUR-DAY MATCHES (second day): New Zealand 129, Transvaal 209; West Indies 112-8 (R Lara)...

Hockey

WOMEN'S ICE HOCKEY CUP (New Delhi): China 2, India 1; South Africa 3, India 4-2.

Ice Hockey

WHL Boston 3, Toronto 0; Ottawa 5, Pittsburgh 4; St Louis 0.

Equestrianism

INTERNATIONAL C-SHIP (London): Catherine Carol Reade 1, Virtual Village Graveney 2, Whitaker 3.

Sport in brief

Motor Racing: All grand prix cars will be fitted with accident data recorders from the start of the 1997 world championship season...

Squash

NEW FINE AND BAN FOR HILL... ANTHONY HILL, an Australian regular in trouble on the professional circuit...

Tennis

CASH'S COURT MANNERS MAY PROVE TO BE EXPENSIVE... THE CHANCES OF PAT CASH landing a wild card to compete in next month's Australian Open...

Swimming

SWIMMING CHAMPIONSHIPS (Oxford): Glenn Power 1, James Hodge 2, James Hodge 3.

Cricket

Brian Lara at last rediscovered his best form as the West Indians rallied on the second day of their four-day match against Victoria in Warragul.

Basketball

THE DERBY STORM have signed Lorenzo Pearson, a 6ft 8in centre-forward who completed his college career at the University of Miami last season...

Sailing

WITH LESS THAN A WEEK TO GO to the start of the Sydney-Hobart Race, the Big Boat Challenge in Sydney Harbour provided a dramatic preview...

Chess

BRITAIN'S TOP-SEEDING Nigel Short made a confident start in his first round match yesterday in his 18-mile race inside the harbour...

Rugby League

Gibson joins Leeds influx

Paul Fitzpatrick

LEEDS RHINOS continue to strengthen their squad for the 1997 Super League season...

Gibson, a former Australian schoolboy international, is Leeds's second signing from the Cowboys following the recruitment of the professional Jamie Mathieu last week...

"I am certain he will prove a great crowd favourite very quickly," he added. Wigan's latest signing Doc Murray will definitely be in the side to play St Helens at Central Park on Boxing Day in the Norweb challenge match...

Murray said: "I'm playing well with Wigan, then I believe that I will have a great chance of making my presence felt at Test level." The 24-year-old Murray will be one of three new signings on parade. Stuart Lester, a prop, also from Auckland Warriors...

Oldham Bears have signed Vince Favcott, a player they have been chasing for three years, on a two-year contract. The 36-year-old former Leeds and Warrington forward...

Hockey

Sydney upgrade and Sixsmith award provide timely fillip

IT WAS NOT A BAD WEEK for hockey, led by the international federation's confirmation that 10 women's teams will take part in the Sydney Olympics...

Ski Hotline advertisement with contact information for SkiPost and Ski Snapshot, including phone numbers and website details.

Beed ahead of the game

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A for

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Exile on main street Anderson prepares for cup holders 20



Taking over at the bottom Pearce in the hot seat at Forest 22

The Guardian Sport

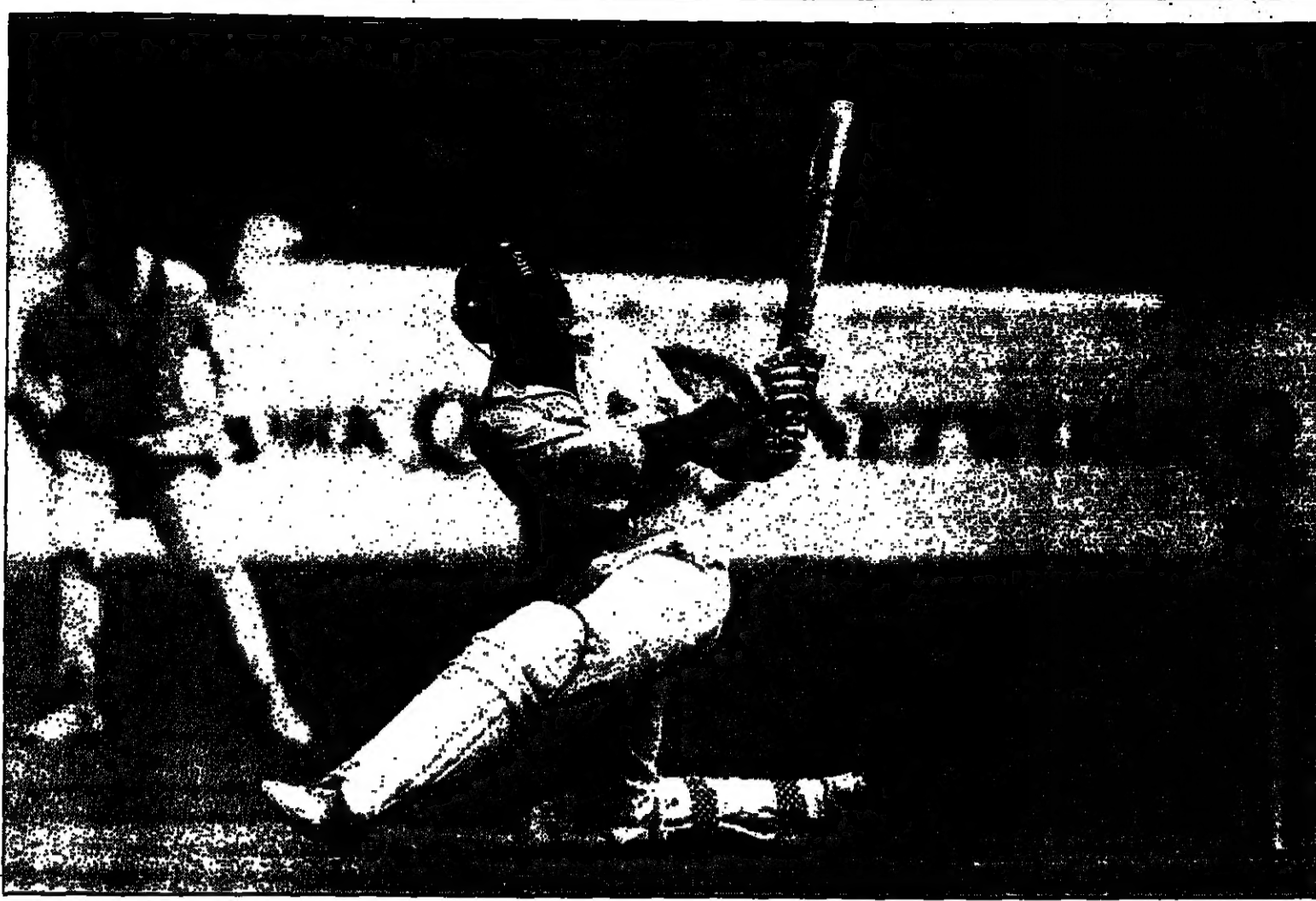
Hussain century rescues wobbly England

A CENTURY from Nasser Hussain steadied England nerves in the first Test against Zimbabwe in Bulawayo yesterday when the tourists finished on 306 for four, only 70 behind. Hussain finished unbeaten on 101 and, with John Crawley also resuming this morning on 51, England are well placed now to get on top.

"Our aim is now to get a good lead," said Hussain. "So far we have not seen how Zimbabwe bat when under a bit of pressure. They were under a little bit in last Sunday's one-dayer and I didn't think they looked very comfortable."

Hussain and Crawley had come together with England wobbling at 180 for four against the leg-spin of Paul Strang.

David Hopps and Paul Allott, page 23



Hot shot... England's vice-captain Nasser Hussain posts another boundary on the way to his unbeaten 101 yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH: STU FORSTER

Ian Ross on an unauthorised postponement that could cost Bryan Robson's team vital Premier League points

Depleted Boro walk out on Blackburn

MIDDLESBOROUGH could have three Premier League points deducted for withdrawing at 24 hours' notice from their away match with fellow strugglers Blackburn today, a decision

which has infuriated Rovers and their supporters. Without consulting either Premier League or Blackburn officials, the Teesside club announced that they would not travel to Ewood Park because 23 of their players were either

injured or ill, leaving only seven men with first-team experience available. Middlesbrough are fifth from bottom of the Premier League table, Blackburn one place below them. This is the first time since

the Premier League was formed five years ago that a game has been postponed because a club is unable to field a team, and Middlesbrough are bracing themselves for disciplinary action. This may well include the deduction of

league points, which would undermine their increasingly grim fight against relegation. "The decision by Middlesbrough to postpone tomorrow's fixture with Blackburn Rovers has not been approved by the FA Premier League," a Premier League spokesman said last night. "The postponement is therefore in breach of regulations and will be considered by a disciplinary panel in the New Year."

"We are ready to face an inquiry," said Middlesbrough's manager Bryan Robson. "We asked the league if they wanted to send an independent medical team to the club this afternoon to check but they said no. We have sent them all the information we have, including medical evidence. I have run out of players," he concluded. "I just can't put a team out on Saturday."

His Blackburn counterpart, the caretaker-manager Tony Parkes, was unsympathetic and last night called for the league to award the three points to his club. "It is a totally unacceptable situation," he said. "Every club has injury and illness problems and no one has suffered more than us but you are obliged to fulfil your fixtures. We could now slip back into the relegation bracket, having been denied the right to a game."

Parkes added: "It is difficult to know what the punishment should be but at this moment I believe we should be awarded the points. It's as simple as that." Blackburn's anger was heightened by the fact that they were not officially informed of Middlesbrough's decision. The first they knew of the postponement was when a confused Rovers supporter rang Ewood Park early yesterday afternoon to say he had read the announcement on BBC's Centrex service.

The decision could be construed as an act of open rebellion but Middlesbrough's chief executive Keith Lamb is

unrepentant. He claims that 23 players, including Robson and his assistant Viv Anderson, were deemed unfit to make the journey down to Lancashire. "We have an absolutely clear conscience over this," said Lamb. "We have 17 fit contracted professionals. Three of them are goalkeepers and five have never been in the first-team squad, never mind the first team."

"Of the remaining nine, two have made the briefest of first-team appearances so we have seven first-team squad players fit. We felt the players we have available could not properly represent this club."

More soccer, page 22

Back benchers

...and the rest of the team...

...and the rest of the team...

...and the rest of the team...

...and the rest of the team...

...and the rest of the team...

...and the rest of the team...

...and the rest of the team...

Test of reality behind the Twin Towers



David Lacey

THE only surprising thing about this week's announcement that Wembley is to be the site of the new national stadium was that it took so long to state the obvious. Everyone expected it to win the vote.

Details, largely financial, caused the delay. Demolition work on the present Wembley Stadium, which will raise everything but the Twin Towers, is due to begin in 1998. The new 90,000-seat stadium should be opening by 2001. Already the Football Association sees the new Wembley as the centre-piece of its bid to host the 2006 World Cup.

So far so optimistic, yet the briefest of glances at Wembley's history suggests that nothing will be as straightforward as it may have appeared this week. When the 1926 British Empire Exhibition, of which the stadium was the centre-piece, closed amid massive debts one contemporary observer described the scene as "a vast white elephant, a rotting splendour of hopes and the grave of fortunes."

Garrett Southgate could not have put it better. An estimated cost of £200 million already looks a mite conservative and even if this figure proves correct, the contribution from the National Lottery will still leave a shortfall of £80 million.

Graham Kelly, the FA's chief executive, has spoken of Lancaster Gate investing between £40m and £50m in the new stadium. But to judge from the time it took the FA, the Sports Council and Wembley to trash out a leasing agreement, the building of Wembley Mark II may make your average pyramid look like a rush job. The present stadium, incidentally, was built in 300 days.

Even if the new Wembley arises on time it will not guarantee the success of England's World Cup bid. That will be decided by FIFA politics, which are becoming ever more labyrinthine.

If, as expected, Lennart Johansson replaces Joao Havelange as president in 1998 the next World Cup but two may well head back to Europe. Germany, however, were two years ahead of England in announcing their bid for 2006, and the FA will do well to make up for lost time.

Not that setting the pace guarantees anything. If it did, Japan would hardly be having to share the 2002 tournament with South Korea.

Already doubts have been raised about the wisdom of rebuilding Wembley as a venue for both football and athletics. In its 73 years Wembley has seen greyhound racing, speedway, the 1948 Olympics, Billy Graham and Madonna. But it was purpose-built as a football stadium.

Alex Fynn, the former director of Saatchi & Saatchi who has written several books on the commercial side of football and is consultant to a number of clubs at home and abroad, believes it would have made more sense to renovate the present stadium, leaving Manchester's new 60,000-seat affair to host the 2001 World Athletic Championships and the Commonwealth Games the following year. Fynn does not believe that an English bid for the 2006 Olympics is practicable.

"We don't need a national stadium when we've already got Wembley," Fynn argues. "National stadiums are built for one major event and only become viable if football clubs, like Bayern in Munich, or Roma and Lazio in Rome, then move in. The 1992 Olympic Stadium in Barcelona is already a white elephant. Nou Camp is still the main football venue."

It could be argued that Wembley, a Barbara Cartland among stadiums, has been living for far too long on romantic traditions and that the reality is beyond renovation. But if, in trying to do all things to all sportsmen, the new Wembley loses the unique atmosphere which, in 1968 as much as 1966, confirmed its status as the world's favourite football ground, then something precious will have gone forever.

Sir Arthur Elvin, who began as an assistant in a tobacco shop at the 1925 exhibition, risked financial ruin to establish Wembley as the venue of legends.

Now someone of similar vision is needed just along the road from Neasden — Sir John Hall, perhaps, if Newcastle City Council decides ducks are more important than Magpies.

Vandals dig up Orient pitch but Shilton game goes ahead

PETER SHILTON will play his 1,000th League game against Brighton tomorrow despite an attempt by vandals to sabotage his big day by digging up parts of Leyton Orient's pitch.

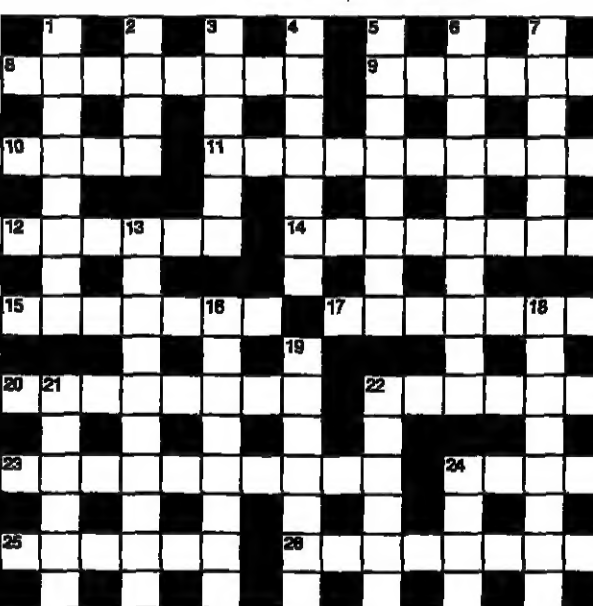
Orient's groundsman Charlie Hasler and his staff spent hours repairing the damage yesterday after the intruders dug up around the centre circle and in front of the main stand. "It's amazing what they did," said Hasler. "There was almost a three-foot hole in one place. It's taken us two days to repair the damage and get the pitch back in shape."

Hasler is considering standing guard at Brisbane Road tonight to ensure his efforts are not wasted. "I want to make sure that nothing will spoil Sunday's game."

There could be further problems tomorrow if Brighton supporters try to exploit the publicity surrounding the game, which is being televised live on Sky, to further their campaign against the chairman Bill Archer and chief executive David Bellotti.

"We are talking about a great occasion and it should not be spoiled in any way for Peter," said Orient's chairman Barry Hearn. "I don't believe we are ever going to see anybody playing 1,000 League games again."

Guardian COLLINS Prize Crossword No 20,842



Set by Crispa

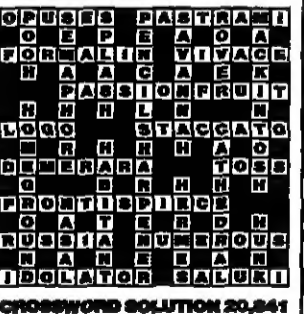
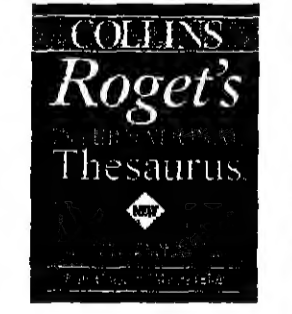
- Across
8 Developing a leaning for a certain woman (8)
9 Having a little gown in grey silk made (8)
10 A joiner creating a row (4)
11 His exploits hard work to demand a lot in the trial (10)
12 Fruit will be provided when mothers take over (8)
14 Think to mislead a supporter (8)
17 Not one can get in there (7)
18 Following recent set-back, a fine man was discharged (4,3)
20 Scarcity, but only for a brief period (8)

- Down
1 Time ain't for frittering, pall (8)
2 Close fight (4)
3 Hear sterling is to catch up (8)
4 The fool's into drink — it offers some comfort (7)
5 Begin to approach outside people with a note (8)
6 Given no support, getting tissues and breaking down (10)
7 Attachment for a girl over the water (8)
13 Wild Australian or Roman merrymaking (10)
16 See about diletty dandified with much pleasure (8)
22 Hat makers read of (8)
23 A blunder never to be repeated (5,5)
24 Expansive, unscrupulous, and astute (4)
25 Buyable housing the single may well find tolerable (8)
26 Trying dress in front of a number (8)

A copy of the Collins Roget's International Thesaurus will be sent to the first five correct entries drawn. Entries to Guardian Crossword No 20,842, P.O. Box 315, Mitcham, Surrey CR8 2AX, by first post on Friday. Solution and winners in the Guardian on Monday, December 30.

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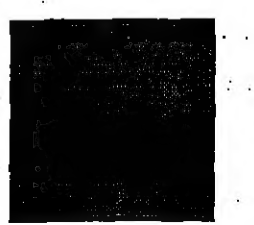


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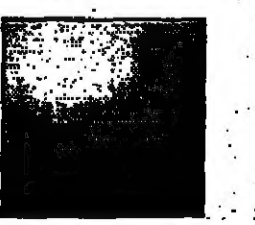
"Oh S*g!!! What can I get for Vicky?"



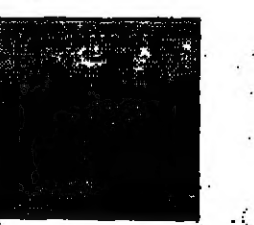
Music From The Motion Picture "Evita"
"I've heard so many good things about the film I can't wait to see it. Even Beryl Herrera was singing about her on the city, called her magnificent. I think I've heard her version of "Don't Cry For Me Argentina" and it was almost down my spine. Plus there's a new song which Andrea Lopez Walker wrote especially for her, called "You Must Love Me" and, of course, "Another Song: In Another Hall". Why wait?



Everything But The Girl "The Best Of"
"Your song 'Loving' was brilliant. I included it on my playlist in Australia and every time it came on I cried. This has got all their classics, including 'Pantomime', which they recorded with Natalie Aspinall, and new songs of 'Driving', 'Your Heart Is', 'Fire 'N' Don't Want To Talk About It', 'Love Is Strange' and 'Black & Ebony'. They're all here."



Alison Moyet "Jagged Little Pill"
"Her music is brilliant. She was a winner at the Brit Awards and the Grammys and has nearly been out of the charts or off the radio all year. I know all the words to her songs: 'Don't Open Love', 'Lovers', 'Head Over Feet', 'All I Really Want' and 'Fool In My Frock'. She really tells it like it is and good for her, I say. Definitely."



Rod Stewart "If We Fall In Love Tonight"
"Nobody sings love songs like Rod Stewart. What a voice, and he's had some great love songs in the charts, all of which are on this record. 'Have I Told You I Love You', 'I Don't Want To Talk About It', 'Downtown Train', 'Don't You Forget About Me' (Walking With A Panther), 'This Is My Heart', 'The Heart of the Matter'. Plus there's some new versions of classics like 'When I Need You' to bring it up to date. Lovely, lovely."



Mark Morris "Return Of The Mack"
"His brilliant, Mark Morris, he's a real gem. He's got a great voice and they're all on this album. 'Chay', 'Let's Get Down', the number one 'Return Of The Mack', 'Honey' and that lovely slow one 'Tippity'. And he's got just one more, 'I'll Be There'. The Mack is a real gem and the MOBO awards and I've read that he's just about to be inducted in America. He's the Mack, alright."